$0.75
DECEMBER 1978 — JANUARY 1979

In Unity AND THE GAY CHRISTIAN

NEWS AND OPINION JOURNAL

UNIVERSAL FELLOWSHIP OF METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCHES

WORLD CHURCH EXTENSION

An Elder's Message

As Long As Love Shall Last...

the Rev. John H. Hose

When Metropolitan Community Church of Los Angeles came into being in October of 1968, our outreach was into Los Angeles County. Little did any of us dream at that time that one day we would have churches in such remote places as Australia and New Zealand. During the current biennium, when I have had the pleasure of serving as liaison Elder to the District of Australasia, I have been afforded the opportunity to become better acquainted with the congregations there. In the interest of better communications, and to afford the members of those churches to strengthen their kinship with the UFMCC, it was decided that I would visit them this summer.

I left Tampa on August 8 to embark on a trip around the world. Enroute, I was privileged to spend a few days in Greece, and in Bangkok, Thailand, before I winged my way to my first stop "down under".

On the evening of August 16, I disembarked at Perth, Australia, where I was met by the Rev. Art Cazeault (then District Coordinator and Pastor of Melbourne MCC), who travelled with me throughout the District. With him were Max Carnaghan, Worship Coordinator of the Perth Study Group, and his lover, Colin, who were my hosts in Perth. They whisked me off to "tea" and a very soft bed.

On the morning of the 17th, I was given a grand tour of Perth, up into a forest preserve, a visit to the vineyards of the Swan river valley, lunch in King's Park. That evening, Max hosted a tea for the Board of the local group, and held "open house" for the members and friends. Approximately 30 persons were present, and we had a time of sharing and learning more about each other. They definitely gave me the feeling of being "at home" with my sisters and brothers in Christ, our common heritage.

The following day, I was privileged to share with a group on the University Campus who are known as the Tertiary Christian Association. They were a marvelous group of Christian young people (largely not gay), but into achieving as much understanding as possible. They had the usual curiosity about how we were reacting to Anita Bryant, and were interested in all aspects of our work to bring about the true spirit of Christ in the world. Then we were off too services, held in their beautiful chapel. Of course, it was preceded by a "tea", in the nature of a pot-luck supper. Some 25 persons attended the service as we celebrated the Lord's Supper. Since we had been advised in June that there was no viable work in Perth, it was with much joy that I observed that MCC is alive and well in Australia's westernmost city. They are not only remote from us, but are about the same distance from the next nearest MCC in Australia, as St. Louis is from L.A. We then made the rounds of the local pubs doing our missionary work, and, amazingly enough, it was just that - we met and interested many others in MCC. The next morning, off we went — Art Cazeault and I - - to Adelaide, our next port-of-call. How privileged I felt that God had sent me forth into this new vineyard.

We were really met by a delegation at Adelaide. The Rev. Renee Hein, Margaret and Ellen, Peter and Ross, Hugh and Sally, Jamie, and others. They drove me along the South Coast enroute to Renee's flat where we were going to have a get-together, so that I could see the sun setting over the ocean. As the evening progressed, some 30-40 people gathered round the heater in the living room, and we had a wonderful time of sharing and getting acquainted. We talked far into the night about the UFMCC -- what it's all about and what it means in the lives of so many. It was truly an evening of AGAPE.

Sunday, we sallied forth to the church to see their new sanctuary, over which they had labored long and lovingly to make a beautiful chapel, office, and social room. I shared in their pride. Then to the mountains for a "Devonshire Tea" (which I relabeled the Fat Man's Curse). After seeing the rest of this oldest of capitol cities, we returned to get ready for the evening service. During the service that evening, the chapel was jammed with more than 50 persons. It was interesting that they were dedicating a new organ, which had been given to them, and we had dedicated a new organ in Tampa the Sunday before I left. I was privileged to preach, and God really blessed. A reception followed the service, and their social committee presented a buffet worthy of Tampa's tyro catering crew. (Wonder what it is in me that brings out the gourmets in our churches?) And those beautiful people! Surrounded by their wonderful Christian love, I wanted to stand on the roof top and shout: "What a Fellowship, What a joy divine!" After church, we stopped at a meeting of a local bike club, whom we were in the process of wooing back to the church. Monday, Joan, Renee, Art, and I were given a tour of the Barossa Valley, which is famous for its wineries, etc.

Our plane to Melbourne departed late Monday afternoon. As though we had not been surrounded by enough of the warmth and love of the Adelaide congregation, seven of them came directly from work to the airport to speed us on our way. To cap our wonderful stay, the farewell party clambered onto a wrought iron fence in the departure area. Once they spotted us on the plane, they clung to the fence waving goodbye until the plane taxied out of sight. Art sat there sniffling, muttering something about "must be catching cold." Nearly all of them are planning to come to General Conference in 1979. Thank God! Otherwise, how could you stand to part from them? I reassured myself that we would meet again, and hopefully someplace this side of the "sweet by and by!"

After an hour's flight, we reached Melbourne where Jan and Karen met us, whisked us away to home and a lovely dinner, after stopping at the beautiful mansion which houses MCC Melbourne. After visiting some of the quaint and wonderful markets the next day, we went to the church where a dinner was served and shared with their staff, Board of Directors, and Deacons. Again, we

continued on page 27

In Unity

IN UNITY

LIAISON ELDER
The Rev. Troy D. Perry

EDITOR
Donna J. Wade

EDITORIAL ASSISTANTS
Rick Noll
Gary Turner
Roger Webb

GRAPHICS
Robin Weber

THE GAY CHRISTIAN

EDITOR
The Rev. F. Jay Deacon

IN UNITY is published by the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches, Copyright 1978, all rights reserved. Reproduction of any part of this magazine by any means is prohibited without the written permission of the publisher. The opinions expressed by the writers are their own, and do not necessarily reflect those of the Editor or of the Universal Fellowship. The appearance of a name in this magazine does not denote affectional or sexual preference.

Address all correspondence to:

UFMCC, IN UNITY
5300 Santa Monica Blvd., Suite 304
Los Angeles, CA 90029

2	An Elder's Message	Rev. Elder John H. Hose
4	Gospel Goes Global	Rev. Elder Freda Smith
6	A Christmas Meditation	Rev. Jeffrey D. Pulling
7	The Church's Responsibility To All	Rev. Clifford Connors
8	The Bottom Line	T. Earlye Scott
9	*The Gay Christian*	
	HOUGEN ON SOCIAL ACTION	
	BOUCHARD ON ETHICS	
18	A Pastoral Challenge: Can You Keep My Secret?	Rev. Jim N. Dykes
19	The Rev. Jean White: Profile Of A Christian	Donna J. Wade
20	Communications Gap!	Donna J. Wade
21	News Composite	Patrick J. Townson
22	The Fellowship Family	

SUBSCRIBE TO IN UNITY

A donation to the work and ministry of the Universal Fellowship provides a year's subscription in return. IN UNITY is published bi-monthly.

Year's subscription mailed 1st class in USA, Canada & Mexico . . . . . $ 8.00
Year's subscription mailed surface rate to other. 8.00
Year's subscription mailed via air to other 12.00

Enclosed please find my donation in the amount of $ _____. Please send me the next six issues of IN UNITY magazine.

Name _____

Address _____

_____

The fastest growing Christian Churches in the world are, and have always been, mission-minded. These churches have an intense commitment to reach out into areas throughout the world where the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is needed. It spread across the known world like the proverbial water on hot grease. It did not stagnate. It did not turn inward on itself like a vacuum tube. There was no danger of implosion, of it inhaling everything inward. The early Church was expansive, missionary, and alive. Abundantly.

The early Church mushroomed, flourished under persecution, was buoyed by its vision, and strengthened, rather than burdened, by the mandate to carry its kerygma to the uttermost ends of the earth.

Even a dispassionate and disinterested observer of either Church History, or of the present-age church, can note the correlation between a church's sense of missionary zeal and that church's growth. Christian churches not concerned and consumed with the vision of the great commission do not grow. Churches thrive under persecution. The Polish Church, which has sent forth the new Pope from its burgeoning growth is an enigma to those who do not understand the Church of Jesus Christ. It is an enigma to those who would look at the extreme difficulty and hardship of a Christian church under a hostile regime, and marvel at its vigor. Yet Christians should not marvel, they should see the re-enactment of a principle twenty centuries old. The principle of the early Church. Christian churches survive under all kinds of adverse conditions if their view and their vision is outward. A look at the fastest growing churches in the world today would reveal that their common denominators are the consuming commitment of its members to live the Gospel of Christ, and a zeal for missions.

The UFMCC has been remarkable in its growth. The strength of that growth has been our vision, and that vision has been ever-expanding. How quickly the first General Conference followed the first meeting. How quickly our early saints caught fire with the zeal of going out. How they burned with the urgency of our message. How eagerly was the message received. Absorbed. Passed on.

It was too large a message, too great a hope, it was too far beyond what could be confined within what was then the fastest growing church in the city of Los Angeles. It was too far beyond what could be confined within one of the fastest growing churches in the continental United States. It was too far beyond what could be confined to Canada, Alaska, Hawaii, Australia, New Zealand. It was the power of the growing church. And it has fed energy into our Fellowship from the beginning. Our vision is our strength.

Everywhere I go I am moved by the interest in World Church Extension. This interest is the pulse of our people. This interest is the life of our Fellowship. This hunger is everywhere. This concern. This reaching out. This thirst to be involved. This is proof that we are a healthy church. This is the confirmation that we are Christ's church, still being called to Macedonia. This proof is alive in our members.

Our people want to know of the Rev. Joan Wakeford as she and her small group in Durban, South Africa struggle against odds, which most of us would find practically impossible to imagine. Lighting a candle, in a very dark place. Yet there is not enough darkness in this world to hide the light of that one candle. It is flickering there. A small group in Durban. Impossible to advertise. Like the early Church, it is whispered in the underground. In the present day catacombs. Like a pebble in the pond, the ripples go out. Joan writes that new people are attending. Others hear and hide the precious news within their hearts for another day.

Everyday Christ is turning "isms" into "wasms" through the ministry of the UFMCC. Everywhere. Racism. Sexism. Ageism. Provincialism, because we are one in Christ Jesus.

Two years ago in Sacramento, I watched as the Rev. Wakeford lovingly, reverently, consecrated communion. Serving as her acolyte, I watched closely as she stepped forward to serve the elements. We are so much our *roots*. Was she her culture? What would her body language reveal as she reached out to our melting-pot-mixture of persons? I saw love. Christ's love, in whom we are all one.

That message is being carried into the heart of Apartheid today by a small, brave, determined woman. Our people want to hear, to know, to help.

I know our church is vigorously alive when people ask about our works in Nigeria. There is no longer only one group there. The Rev. Sylvanus Maduka has carried on in the UFMCC missionary spirit. There are now study groups in Ezinichi-Imo State, Okigwi, and Umu-Awa-Ogee, as well as the church in Zaria. Beset by poverty and deprivation, the Rev. Maduka has not wavered in his ministry, nor in his loyalty to the UFMCC. Walking, taking his whole family with him on one small and unpredictable motorcycle, praying for medical supplies, for that van he spoke of during his visit to the U.S. in 1976, and often praying for food, the Rev. Maduka has carried on. The groups are growing, as is the vision. The Rev. Maduka is struggling for a medical clinic, as ministers must meet the medical needs of the sick in Africa. Maduka yearns for a means to train the displaced children and adults who are in his care. There is a need for trained UFMCC leaders to go out into these groups. Our hearts are touched. We want to know. We are involved.

The imaginations of a number of people throughout MCC churches in Northern California and Colorado have been fired recently by the Rev. Rhea Miller's vision of a religious community in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico. The Rev. Miller has been in Mexico for a number of months and has sent out a brochure describing the work.

GOES GLOBAL

the Rev. Freda Smith, Executive Secretary, World Church Extension

The Board of Elders has taken this project under advisement and is studying its feasibility.

Our vision is strengthened when, throughout the Fellowship, persons eagerly seize the news of new mission fields. In India, the Rev. John I. Paul, a minister in the Church of South India (a United Church in India) has written repeatedly and expressed the desire to affiliate his church with the UFMCC. A group of people in Spain have contacted the Rev. Jose von Buhler, our Church Extension Officer in the United Kingdom, desiring a work to be started in Spain. The Rev. von Buhler, who speaks and writes a number of languages, is being kept busy with correspondence throughout Europe.

The Rev. von Buhler, who is one-third of our World Church Extension Committee in the U.K., (along with the Rev. Jean White of London, and the Rev. Jo McVay-Abbott) have done a massive work in England during the past year. There has been a great amount of advertising, as well as travel and public appearances, so that we now have eight groups in Britain alone. The contact persons are well-advertised, and their phone numbers given out, which makes it possible for these groups to be easily contacted.

Our World Church Extension Committee in the United Kingdom has been vigorous in reaching out, and has certainly produced many works within the last year. Yet it is only a reflection and an extension of the spirit which has been operating within our Fellowship from the beginning.

The UFMCC is, and has always been, a Fellowship which embodies the great commission of Jesus Christ. We are aware that it is our mission to carry the good news of the Gospel to every living creature to the uttermost ends of this earth. We are aware that this mission is neither easy nor cheap. Churches which choose the easy or the inexpensive role for themselves are churches which turn in upon themselves, strangle, and die.

We were not brought into being to be self-serving in our faith, but to fulfill that great commission. The great commission of Christ should never be looked upon as a burden, but as an opportunity. Churches which observe it are blessed. Christians who make it a priority within their lives are blessed. Our Fellowship has made it a priority. At present, the UFMCC is sending monthly financing to the United Kingdom, to Nigeria, and to South Africa. Each of these works has need for more than is being done. As we answer that need, we too shall grow. This is God's equation. †

From left to right: The Rev. Jose von Buhler, Church Extension Officer, United Kingdom and Western Europe; the Rev. Joan Wakeford, Durban, South Africa; the Rev. Jo McVay - Abbot, Pastor of Birmingham MCC and member of Church Extension Committee, United Kingdom and Western Europe; John Crawley, Worship Coordinator MCC Croydon, England; the Rev. Rhea Miller, former Pastor of MCC Boulder, now working in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico.

EMMANUEL: A CHRISTMAS MEDITATION

the Rev. Jeffrey Pulling
Dean, Samaritan Theological Institute

And Isaiah said, "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary humans, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord will give you a sign. Behold, a young woman shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel (that is, God-is-with-us). . . " (Isaiah 7:13—14)

Emmanuel. We usually hear this strange name for Jesus only during Advent and Christmastide. It occurs in the haunting Advent carol, "O Come, O Come Emmanuel", and in Matthew's account of the birth of Jesus (Matt. 1:18- 25). What about the account of the rest of the year? Why do we overlook this name for Jesus? The word *Emmanuel* is a key to understanding who Jesus is. The term *God-is-with-us* refers to the meaning of Christmas, that is the Incarnation of God in our world. If we overlook this title for Jesus, then we are neglecting to affirm that God is really with us in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

The title *Emmanuel* is important to me because it underscores one of the basic, orthodox doctrines of Christianity, but a doctrine that is often ignored or misunderstood. I am referring to the dual nature of Christ, that Christ is both divine and human, fully God and fully a human being.

What does it mean to affirm that Christ Jesus is fully God and fully human? We must explore this in order to appreciate the impact of the Incarnation. To say that Christ Jesus is both divine and human means that when we encounter Jesus, we meet both God and ourselves. Jesus *discloses* who God is, and he also *exposes* who we are. Jesus is a window into God. We look through him and we can see the nature, will, and purposes of God. But also in the window we get a mirror reflection of ourselves, we see ourselves for what we are. If we look hard enough through the window, we can also see what we *could* be, what God intended us to be in the first place. Jesus is the model for full and true humanity. Saint Paul called him the Second Adam, the first to rise to new life, the pioneer of our faith.

When we look at and listen to Jesus in the Gospel accounts, we come fact to face with someone who confronts us and challenges us to be new persons, to get out of our ruts and be transformed into what God is calling us. Read such passages as Matthew 18: 1-4; Mark 8: 27-37; Mark 10: 17-31; Luke 5: 1-11; Luke 10: 38-42; John 5: 1-9; John 6: 60-69, John 14: 1-11. When you read these passages, let Jesus speak to you in your own situation. Ask yourself this question, if Jesus told you this same thing in the context of your life, what would he mean?

TO SAY THAT CHRIST JESUS IS BOTH DIVINE AND HUMAN MEANS THAT WHEN WE ENCOUNTER JESUS, WE MEET BOTH GOD AND OURSELVES.

To hear Jesus speak to us and to understand what he is saying, we must affirm that he is both fully God and fully a human being. It is vital to maintain both his divinity and his humanity. If we do not keep this balance in our faith, we trivialize Jesus, and we negate his power to address us in our real world and to transform us. If Jesus were just a human being, which many people have claimed, what is all this big fuss about him? If God is not really revealed in him, if the meaning and purpose of life are not really disclosed in him, then why bother with him more than any other great teacher or prophet? The affirmation of Christian faith is that in Christ Jesus, God *did* speak to us and act for us in a decisive , definitive way. It really was *God* who was revealed and active in Jesus.

That is not the whole story, however. Jesus was also a real live human being, with feelings, temptations, hurts, joys, cravings, etc., like every other human being. He truly was one of us. Jesus was not only *God*-with-us, he was also God-with-*us*.

Because Jesus was a human we can identify with him. He has gone the way before us as the forerunner of our faith. He is the pioneer of the New Humanity, into which God is calling us. We can follow *him* to become what God created *us* to be.

Christ is both divine and human, not just one or the other. If he were just human, why bother with him? Of what lasting significance is he? If he were just divine, what does he have to do with us? If he is just some supernatural being masquerading in a human body, how can he touch our lives? How can we identify with him? We must maintain his humanity as well as his divinity, and in our haste to honor Christ, we often overlook this. This is sad, because if Jesus is not human, he cannot speak to our situation. A divine being who is not totally involved in our life cannot address us where we are. So if we emphasize just Christ's divinity or just humanity, we trivialize Jesus and make him irrelevant to ongoing human life.

So we affirm both in the Incarnation. Jesus both discloses who God is and exposes who we are. By accepting Christ Jesus as our Lord and Savior, we open ourselves to being taught what the meaning and purpose of human life are, and we are given the power and means to internalize that ourselves. If we want to grow in our faith, we must listen to the challenges that Jesus puts to us in the Gospel accounts. We can only hear these challenges, however, if we understand both the divinity and the humanity of the one who issues these challenges. Sloppy theology can prevent a real encounter with Christ. We must listen to Jesus as someone who reveals God, but we must also listen to him as someone who is like us and who speaks to us in our real life circumstances. Jesus shows us where we are, and he points out where we could be. Jesus opens up to us a new kind of life.

Keep this in mind when you sing, *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*. This title for Jesus captures the meaning and wonder of Christmas: GOD IS WITH US. In Christ Jesus, God came to us, spoke to us in a definitive way, and acted for us in a decisive fashion. †

The Church's Responsibility To All

the Rev. Clifford Connors
Pastor, MCC Sydney, Australia

Like a prehistoric spectacle, the Christian Churches populate the 1970's, their archaic buildings a grim reminder of better, more productive times past and dead. The Church is no longer relevant for moderns, its lavish liturgies and ceremonials appear hideous and totally discordant with the rapid pace of life in the twentieth century. Everywhere there is evidence of change on a radically escalating scale, except in the churches where cobwebbed theologies are occasionally displayed by minds perfectly attuned to Victorian ethics. Our churches are irrelevant because, in the main, they choose to be.

Yet there was a time when the Christian Churches set the pace and style of life in the Western world. In the Middle Ages, great Church men and women were leaders in the world of ideas and culture. Their powerful insights into human nature and their testimonials on how to live productively and happily, stirred the consciences of their listeners and invaded hearts as a refreshing ray of hope and joy. These leaders attested to their preaching by practicing what they taught.

What a far and sad cry this picture is from the present. Where are the men and women , filled with Christ, who set the pace and pulse of modern life? Where are the religious consciences of the nation, unafraid to speak the Gospel message, and to be ridiculed and persecuted as a result? Where does one look for such Christians? Among the hierarchy? Most of these people are inaccessible, and when they do make public appearances, it is to expound traditional doctrines with such an air of conservatism, that we are appalled that the human heart and mind could become so stagnated. Among our clergy? Let any clergyperson deviate from the traditional norm and go unharrassed by his or her superiors. Original thinkers in these ranks have their writings suppressed. They are investigated scrupulously for heresy, and regarded with suspicion by their peers and congregations. They do not dare speak out for fear of recriminations from above and bel below.

That only leaves the laity. Fortunately, here lies the hope and heart of Christianity. Yet what opportunities does an informed, sincere lay person get to inspire his/her peers in a Church gathering, what opportunities are afforded the original thinker to expound those insights into modern life that could easily be the answer to the questions of fellow humans? Surely the Church authorities must turn more and more to their lay congregants for the clues and answers of today's dilemmas. Who better than they who work in this world among other needy people, can provide the answers to so many questions?

So the hope of the Christian Church lies in the sensitivity and consciousness of its laity to the needs of their fellow humans today. It is today and the future with which the Church must concern itself, and here its vast mechanism of concern must be perfectly geared to the culture, ideas and needs of the 1970's. The Church must be a place for the needy, as well as for the healthy. It is neither a convalescent home nor a refuge. It must be a living organism of persons who are concerned enough about the welfare of others to do something tangible for them.

The Christian Church must be a place where one learns to cope with life. We need to stop from time to time and take good stock of our situation. The Church can be a powerful agent in helping people to question their very reason for existence, and find purposeful direction in their lives. The Church has all the tools necessary for this task at its disposal — the Bible, trained counsellors, educational facilities, etc. Yet an insidious form of religious incest persists in most of our Church groups whereby the "elect" huddle together for safety against the rude intrusions of the external world. The notion, that what God has given is exclusively ours, is rampant in many churches, so that what was established as a means of bringing truth, love, and happiness into the world, is distorted into an exclusive right of the few.

One of the reasons, I believe, for poor Church attendance in this country is that so few of us really feel at ease in a church situation. The catch-call of the Sunday service is conformity — boring, depersonalizing, insipid conformity to the status quo. We are bullied, threatened and spiritually blackmailed into thinking and reacting the way our conservative betters wish. The Churches have, for too long, played the power game from the pulpit, expounding Church politics in the place of the undiluted Gospel of Christ.

THE CHURCH IS NEITHER A CONVALESCENT HOME NOR A REFUGE. IT MUST BE A LIVING ORGANISM OF PERSONS CONCERNED ENOUGH ABOUT THE WELFARE OF OTHERS TO DO SOMETHING TANGIBLE FOR THEM.

This law of conformity brooks no rivals. Persons of differing opinions and suspicious ideas are relegated swiftly to the outer fringe of association. Woe to the homosexual in most mainstream churches, for he or she has committed the ultimate crime of moral non-conformity, and is punished by ostracization from the "elect" who are, coincidentally, confirmed heterosexuals. It is specifically in this area that Metropolitan Community Church is helpful and relevant. This Church does not discriminate against any person, be they of a different race, of a foreign culture or creed, Catholic or Quaker, homosexual or heterosexual. It believes that God created all things the way they are, and that whatever God has made, is by nature, good and healthy. Therefore, if one is transexual, then one is to find fulfillment and happiness in this life as a transexual. To deny this, and opt for a different sexual orientation, is to reject God's purpose in creating a person as a unique individual.

What I have said previously about the failings of mainstream Christian Churches also applies to MCC to a degree. We have failed many times to educate people to the truth about homosexuality, we have failed to give purpose and aid to our needy gay brothers and sisters, we have failed to be spiritual leaders in our society, and, above all, we have failed to love as Christ loves us. We are

continued on back cover

The Bottom Line

t. earlye scott

I live with a Nag.

Sometimes it really gets on my nerves. I just want to scream — "What do you expect of me?" "I'm only human!" "I do the best I can." "Leave me alone and don't bug me." But, the nagging seldom ceases.

Occasionally I give in to the nagging and really make an effort to change my ways. This is satisfactory for awhile but not long lasting. Never can please.

Lately, the nagging has gotten worse and I'm really getting worried. What will happen if I can't change or do better? I'm not sure how to go about it — what can I do to change? I'm beside myself some days. I don't really know what I'm doing wrong.

LIVING WITH A NAG IS A DRAG — GOD IS MY NAG. AND, GOD AIN'T LETTING UP.

There's really only one reason I'm even bothering to write about this universal problem. That reason is NOT that I have anything profound to say, or that I even have *anything* to say.

The reason is that God has been nagging me to write. Why isn't God clearer about these things? I have no ideas and little self-discipline. I'm even unclear about having any talent at this sort of thing.

(I'd appreciate one thing from you when you finish reading this article. My ego is big enough to assume you will finish it. Please let me know somehow, letters or phone calls to *In Unity* are acceptable, if this article meant anything to you or if you got anything from it. The feedback could help the nagging and perhaps I'll feel compelled to continue writing. Would not want to let my audience down. I might even get God off my back about all of this.)

When I began writing I had no idea what to say but I've got one now. Let's see where it takes me. Don't you dislike it when people take so long to get to the point?

I'M ANGRY! IT'S NOT ONE OF THOSE SHORT--TERM YELL--AND--GET—IT--OVER--WITH--ANGERS EITHER. IT'S A CONTINUOUS ALWAYS--WITH--ME KIND. I ONLY REALIZED RECENTLY HOW ANGRY I AM.

I TEACH SCHOOL. Yes, I'm one of "those" people. The name I'm using isn't even my original name — but right now it's my real name because that other one belongs to someone else. Catch my drift? This name is my honest out in the open one. I've taught school for nine years and until Anita I thought I really was saving the children. How misguided could I be? I'm not saving them at all. She is right! I don't like that one bit. Not one bit. I hate it!

You see, as a Christian I can't even minister openly to those students who I see in need. I can do some counseling, but I must always be careful. They're sensitive about mixing God and books. In addition, I can't be an honest role model for those who need that. I must pretend to be a single woman, independent and happy being alone. My real identity must be guessed at. Even then I am unapproachable for gay kids. Frustrating.

Let me tell you more about this anger. I came back to my job in September after having spent a summer of complete honesty. Even quit lying to my parents. There I sat with my colleagues as they announced all those who got married over the summer. I really felt left out, cheated. I played their game though, gave safe answers and avoided situations where I would have to really lie. What a drain.

HERE I AM, A TEACHER WHO CAN'T SAVE ANYONE. I TEACH MY STUDENTS VALUES WHILE I TURN AGAINST MINE. I AM NOT TRUTHFUL WITH THEM AND I CRY ABOUT THAT.

What a terrible experience not to be able to share the important things in my life with the people I care about.

I feel like the invisible man Ralph Ellison wrote about, I am invisible only because they refuse to see me. I am a figment of their imagination.

One of these days I will be seen for what I am. I may not be accepted or understood or liked but I will be real. I won't be ignored anymore or forced to lie. I don't plan on helping people keep their eyes blinded.

Another thing that grinds me is people saying they don't feel comfortable in certain situations when my lover is present. Or they can't handle it. I get infuriated because for years I gave up feeling comfortable so they wouldn't be hurt by knowing the truth. I've spent time going over the script so I wouldn't say the wrong thing. When is it their turn to make me comfortable, to care about my feelings and wonder if I might be hurt? I will not let them be too comfortable at my expense.

Yes, I'm still angry because with my job there are only two solutions. That's put up and shut up or *quit*. If I put up or shut up I let them run me. If I quit I've let them run me out. I used to think I had a calling to this profession but now I'm not so sure. I don't like their rules anymore.

And God continues to nag me.

Most understanding Lord,

I ask that you help all of us you nag, so that we might know what your will is and what you would have us do. Help us who are living two lives survive the pain it causes us. Soothe our hearts from the hurt we incur from playing by unfair rules. Show us a way of becoming a whole person so that we might fulfill your will. And God, I also pray that our sisters and brothers who are not living double lives will help us and understand the frustration we feel. Don't stop nagging me God. I need it. But, please, help me to know what you want me to do. †

THE GAY CHRISTIAN

A journal of theological reflection from Metropolitan Community Church

Strategies for Christian Social Action

Edward T. Hougen

As a Christian church we are called to witness to a particular way of dealing with people, friend and foe alike; that way is with a reconciling love. The *means* by which we work for justice is the end we are teaching. For the Christian faith affirms that the ends and means are one. Christ is the Way and the Truth and the Life.[18] Since the means, that is the way one works and deals with others, is the end, that is the expression and realization of the kingdom, the central analytical task shifts to the means or methods of social action. At any point the question may legitimately be raised, is this course of action or tactic grounded in love. If it is the effort is on track, if it is not, however brilliant a ploy, it undermines the central task and is a poor tactic. In dealing with the opponent of the social change one is working to effect, it is tempting to take illusory short cuts that concentrate on the end (that is the stated objective) and justify unloving means (which for the Christian is the end).

The Christian social activist can be an exasperating ally of the non-christian tactician, since the Christian perceives the problem always in terms of methods as well as goals. Such a perspective may result in the Christian's refusal to employ some of the traditional power tactics even though in the short run it appears to be the quickest method of reaching a particular goal.

The Christian approach to love and power is to see them more nearly as identical than as opposites. Traditional wisdom sets up the false choice of love *or* power with a consequent misunderstanding of both terms. Loveless power is not true power but weakness since as King points out, "Power is the ability to fulfill purpose; action which defeats purpose is weakness."[19] Purpose for the Christian is the establishment of God's kingdom of love and reconciliation. Mao's notion that one must use the gun to get rid of the gun is an expression of weakness since the means used to reach the goal is a denial of the goal. The fact that guns continue to be used when the elimination of guns is the expressed intent demonstrates the impotence of such "power." On the other hand, King points out, powerless love is "sentimental and anemic,"[20] and therefore not truly love but a self-indulgent feeling. It is only in grasping that love is power that we truly understand the means by which we are able to accomplish our purpose.

Social action for the Christian is not an occasional activity but a continuing agenda that we either advance or retard in all aspects of our life. That is in everything we do, we are either supporting the forces of liberation and reconciliation or the structures of sin and separation. Therefore a church is always witnessing, not just on those occasions when it might choose to be seen. It is not in our creeds, formal statements of purpose, or worship so much as in how we treat the least, that is the most unloveable in our midst, and how we treat the enemy, that is those who seek to oppress or destroy us, that we witness most powerfully as to our nature and purpose. The power of love and the Christian faith reveals itself precisely in dealing with situations where the world finds love impractical or uncongenial.

As a church our social action strategy for gay liberation must be at its basic level, the development of a program for loving the straight world. Anything less will fail of its purpose. It is to give practical content to this strategy that we now turn our attention.

To ignore the problem of sexism within gay ranks for the sake of unity is to misunderstand the historical context of gay liberation. It is the tactical equivalent of nourishing the

roots of a tree in order to better hack away at its branches.

The theological context of gay liberation is that of mission: To redeem the unjust and imperfect structures of the world so that the law of love or life in the Spirit will prevail in all relationships and structures. Gay liberation is a legitimate arena of activity for the church insofar as God's liberating and redemptive Word concerning the inclusion of gay men and women in God's plan and kingdom has been suppressed. This in turn has led to great suffering and misery which is alwsys the inevitable consequence of suppressing God's true Word. Gay liberation is not an end in itself, but rather a part of a continuing struggle to bring love, justice, and reconciliation to bear throughout the human family. Gay liberation is not our objective, establishing God's kingdom is our objective, and gay liberation is one campaign in achieving that objective. The campaign must always be understood in context of the larger strategy or objective and can never be viewed as an independent function. Otherwise the campaign runs the danger of undermining the overall strategy, and one wins the battle at the cost of losing the war.

Our identity is first and foremost as Christians and secondarily as gays. If our gayness becomes the central witness of our church's life we cease to be the church in its historic task and become instead an eccentric sect with Christian overtones. Our gayness is the experiential vehicle of our saving experience of God's grace — not a sign or measure of our righteousness. In Christ there is neither gay nor straight so that neither gay nor straight has moral significance as a category. To view the straight world as the enemy or the cause of the problem is to render moral significance to a sexual orientation and essentialy grant the very point we are challenging. The straight world is not the enemy but gay/straight thinking is the enemy since it judges as important something which in Christ is irrelevant. Gay/straight thinking is a distortion or to use a more theological term, it is a heresy.

The division between gay and straight on moral rather than experiential terms is the source of the problem. It ascribes censure or condemnation to one group or the other on the basis of sexual orientation rather than the habits or patterns of living that arise out of erroneous attitudes regarding the importance of these orientations. To believe that heterosexual is more God-given than homosexual leads heterosexuals into discriminating against their brothers and sisters in Dhrist on a frivolous basis, removes in effect the sexual dimension of life from the lordship of Christ, and replaces the grace of god with the traditions of humans. (A similar attempt to focus on an irrelevancy as a criteria for admission into God's kingdom occurs in the early church's argument over the admission of gentiles.[17] Circumcision and dietary purity were eventually perceived by the majority to be superceded by the grace of God in Christ.) The sin of the heterosexual person does not arise out of his or her heterosexuality but rather out of his or her false understanding of the importance of sexuality. The same holds true for the gay person. The excesses and abuses so common in the gay subculture derive not from the sexual orientation of its population but the underlying rejection of the worth and value of that orientation. the moral emphasis upon sexual orientation is destructive in its consequence in the lives of both gay and straight people.

Gay/straight thinking is at least as prevalent in the gay subculture as in the straight culture, and therefore it is a fundamental error to assume that gays are any more enlightened or any less heretical than straights around the issue of the theological significance of gayness.

Since the oppression of gays arises out of the heresy of gay/straight thinking, it is the nature of our struggle to replace the heresy with the truth, and the injustice will be revealed. (That this is indeed the central problem in gay liberation can be demonstrated by the fact that in Dade County the appeal to continue the oppression of gays was couched in moral and religious terms. Granting the premise of the heresy, that gay is a morally significant category, the efforts to suppress gay acceptance and expression make sense.) From the Christian perspective to teach a falsehood in place of God's truth is destructive to all parties. Anita Bryant stands as much in need of God's redeeming Word as the self-hating gay, and we ignore either's need for liberation at great cost to everyone.

Our ministry is that of reconciliation between gays and straights since the separation is the consequence of human blindness, that is heresy, that is sin. Therefore any campaign of gay liberation that UFMCC leads or participates in cannot promote the already existing divisions between gay and straight. Polarization is a seductive but fatal trap that gives momentary emotional relief at the cost of strengthening the bonds of oppression, since polarization is the very evil that we are ultimately combatting. The struggle for gay rights becomes the arena of UFMCC's witness to the reconciling power of God's love. Our faithfulness as a church is measured not only in terms of our degree of involvement but more importantly in terms of the kind of involvement.

A further word needs to be said concerning ministering to or loving the straight world, since UFMCC was founded with the express purpose of ministering to the gay population. The need to liberate the straight world as a part of ministering to the gay population is obvious when we realize that most of the destructive patterns evidenced in the lives of gay people are the effect of the homophobic values of the dominant culture which are the cause. To treat only the effects of an unjust system and ignore the cause is futile. Both must be addressed.

An analogy might be seen in paying off a mortgage on a home. Each payment includes both interest on the debt and some reduction on the principle. To only worry about the interest does nothing to alter the indebtedness. As time passes more and more of the payment is used to reduce the principle since with each principle reduction the interest is decreased. In time, more and more of our energy can be devoted to addressing the cause rather than the effect of gay oppression. but even at the early stages of our work part of our efforts must be aimed at altering the cause, that is aimed at changing the attitudes and perceptions of the straight world. In addition, any work we do within the straight world will powerfully demonstrate the Christian nature of our efforts. Ministering to our own community is minimal, "even the tax collectors do the same."[21] Thus, both from the practical aspect of effecting social change and from the clear mandate of the Christian gospel we must start teaching people to love those who persecute them. That is the true source of our power and strength and the means through which we will achieve liberation. Loving our straight brothers and sisters is both the sign and the consequence of our liberation. Treating the opponent with the same love as the ally is the task. Gandhi points this out:

> How to cultivate and preserve equability was the question. How was one to treat alike insulting, insolent, and corrupt officials, co-workers of yesterday raising meaningless opposition, and men who had always been good to one?[22]

How do we develop a program of social action that brings us into loving relationship with the oppressor? This is the essense of non-violent action. Just as in conventional warfare the troops need to go through a program of preparation and training beginning with simple objectives and as they become more seasoned undertaking more challenging tasks, so too in non-violent campaigns. The "soldiers" need discipline, training, and preparation for the task. Each MCC group should as part of its life and program be training and developing its membership in non-violent social action. This process can be undertaken in several stages: the first stage is to educate our members to change their attitude towards dealing with the opponent from hatred and bitterness to love and openess. This stage will inevitably be met by a certain degree of grumbling and resistence, since love and openess requires some real work and change and at first "feels" phony and unreal. The second stage is to initiate contact with the oppressor in some relatively safe environment to begin to practice what one has discussed in theory. (In Boston we chose an historic and prestigious church with a liberal tradition as the setting for our initial venture. This is because people are usually on their best behavior in church and also because the *common* faith that is shared provides an excellent framework for dialogue.) The third stage is to move into a slightly more hostile setting. (In Boston we have targeted the Baptists who as a church are more zealously anti-gay.) The fourth stage is to move into the unprotected structures of the secular world. In each stage the participants are being schooled in ways to effectively love more challenging opponents. Eventually a cadre will be created that can go anywhere bringing to bear all of love's power in any situation. In each setting the group should begin to pick up support and even followers among the group that was originally viewed in opposition. The stronger the opposition, the more powerful becomes the loving witness. However, to move unseasoned troops into a conflict situation beyond their capacity to respond with love is to court disaster. Therefore, gradual preparation and training is an essential aspect of effective non-violent social action.

In any social action effort there are a variety of pitfalls that can undermine the best laid plans. A few of the most insidious are worthy of consideration.

Poor maintenance endangers any task. The people involved in any undertaking need to be supported. Just as an army requires food and rest and recreation to support morale, a Christian army must take human weakness into account. People need to be reassured and have pointed out what they have done well. People whose won needs for love and care and rest are not being met are poorly equipped emotionally for the kind of stress one experiences in loving the opponent. Campaigns should be undertaken that are manageable by the particular group with which one is working. Rest should be planned between engagements. Grandiose schemes may initially rally a group but lead to rapid demoralization when unrealistic expectations are not met. Because the task will take years in its accomplishment pacing is more important than a fast start. The task should be divided into many smaller tasks each capable of producing visible results so that people can measure some of the progress.

The long range goals must always be kept in mind, or one is in danger of taking illusory short-cuts. For example, treating the other as enemy, a tempting way to simplify issues, is always counter-productive in terms of the overall goal. Therefore, when dealing with an opponent, one must be even more scrupulous than when dealing with an ally. Repaying evil for evil legitimizes the tactics of the oppressor and separates us from our only true power source, love and truth.

Gandhi pointed out that "Truth never damages a cause that is just."[23] We must hold fast to the truth even when it appears to be impolitic. For example, the major attack upon gay rights at the present

arises out of the claim that granting such rights will influence children to be gay. The gay defense has been that this is ridiculous because sexual orientation is not subject to influence and gays are of course not out to influence children. Such a defense is totally ineffective because it is based first upon a falsehood — that we are not out to change or influence people, including children, in their attitudes and thinking — and second because it is based upon the homophobic premise that such influence is a bad thing. By changing people's attitudes towards homosexuality from fear and rejection to warmth and acceptance, we will of course see an increase in homosexual expression. People will explore and express their homosexual feelings far more freely in such an atmosphere than in the present hysterical homophobic environment. By providing more truthful, positive gay models, we make homosexuality more attractive to young and old alike. This is precisely what those who oppose relaxation of the taboos fear. Their position is that homosexuality must always be presented negatively in order to reinforce the taboo; even if such a presentation is a distortion of the truth. Our defense must be based upon the position that the truth is what frees people and an exclusive heterosexual model is a lie that leads to ignorance, fear, anxiety, and prejudice. Every person, gay and straight alike, has been heavily influenced and propagandized by the monopolistic heterosexual picture of reality. It is important that people be exposed to an undistorted picture of the gay experience so that they are free to decide for themselves what role, if any, this expression will play in their life and values. Suppression of the rights of gay people is most destructive because it is rooted in a system that justifies the suppression of the truth.

To admit that we are out to influence people's thinking will at first be used to fuel the arguments of the bigots, but will eventually result in clarifying the issues in such a way that reveals we are seeking to show the truth. It is the truth that we want to have an influence on people.

The danger in any institition's involvement in social action is that it is easy to reverse the concept of means and ends. UFMCC an an institution is the means to accomplishing the end, namely, the establishment of God's kingdom on earth. One is not attempting to establish God's kingdom in order to build UFMCC. Strengthening the institution is often seen as the end where various programs are seen as a means to that end and are measured in terms of their effect on institutional growth. Such thinking gradually renders the institution obsolete and ineffective since it has identified self-serving as its task rather than serving the world as a servant. The traditional institutional churches are vivid reminders of Jesus's words, "Those who would save their lives will lose them."[24] UFMCC's sole justification for existing is to nurture and foster ministry and mission. If social action (that is outreach to the straight community) challenges the comfortable direction of institutional growth, the choice must be made in favor of faithful obedience rather than institutional power. For the ultimate source of power for our church is not our numbers of members, budgets or buildings but God's loving and renewing Word.

Our major problem in developing effective alliances with traditional churches is that for them the safety of the instituition, in the short run, is placed before prophetic witness. Nevertheless, many of our natural allies, men and women committed to the Christian faith, are still found within these institutions. If we turn our backs on these structures because of the humiliating frustration and annoyance of dealing with their areas of blindness and stupidity, we cut ourselves off from a rich vein of human resources because the mining process is troublesome. We need to expand greatly our base of support as the Dade County figures so pointedly demonstrate. Christians and women are our natural allies. (In the Massachusetts Council of Churches' task force vote on recommending MCC's admission to the council's board of directors, all of the women voted in support of admission, all of the straight males against.)

It is time for UFMCC to assume a leadership role in developing that support through non-violent strategies of social action directed toward the non-gay world. The difficult and fearful task of engaging that world in loving outreach is calling us. Let us as a church in faithful obedience respond to that call so that our brothers and sisters, both gay and straight, might learn to embrace one another in the love and truth that frees. □

Copyright 1978 Edward Hougen
All rights reserved.

Ed Hougen is pastor of MCC Boston and a social activist in that city. This article is an excerpt of his paper for ordination.

FOOTNOTES

18. John 14:6.
19. *Strength to Love* p. 64.
20. *Where Do We Go From Here* p. 37.
21. Matthew 5:46.
22. *The Story of My Experiments with Truth* p. 265.
23. *Gandhi on Non-violence* p. 33.
24. Luke 9:24.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Gandhi, Mohandus K. *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*. Beacon Press, Boston 1957.

Gandhi, Mohandus K. *Gandhi on Non-violence*, ed. Thomas Merton. New Directions, New York 1964.

King Martin Luther, jr. *Strength to Love*. Harper and Row, New York 1963.

King, Martin Luther, jr. *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos of Community*. Harper and Row, New York 1967.

Mao Tsetung *Six Essays on Military Affairs*. Foreign Language Press, Peking 1972.

Niebuhr, Reinhold *The Childred of Light and the Children of Darkness*. Scribner & Sons, New York 1944.

Tolstoy, Leo *Tolstoy's Writings on Civil Disobedience and Non-violence*. Mentor Books, New York 1967.

Toward Authenticity

by Valerie Anne Bouchard

Editor's Note: "Toward Authenticity" is reprinted with apologies to our readers who were inconvenienced when the fourth and fifth pages were inadvertently reversed in the October-November issue of this magazine.

Live as free people, yet without using your freedom as a pretext for evil; but live as servants of God. (1 Peter 2:16)

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too. If we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we suffer. Our hope for you is unshaken; for we know that as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in our comfort. (2 Corinthians 1:3-7)

THIS ARTICLE is the bare skeleton for the formation of Christian ethical response. In reading, remember that it is only the beginning and that it is thematic in design.

Ethics are incomplete without personal journey. In getting in touch with our journeys and in touch with Christ's impact upon us, ethics works in the themes of dying and rising, liberation as opposed to oppression, the necessity for individual sacrifice for the sake of the community, and the absence and presence of God.

As Christians, we have experienced the birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus the Christ as a significant, uplifting event in our lives. Jesus is fully embodied in our midst. We are to be mindful of his ways so that we can be his disciples.

What is the legacy that the son of God left to us? What is the vocation of Jesus that informs our vocation as the people of God? We need to talk about the vocation of Jesus so that we can get some handles on how to be disciples of Christ.

The writer of First Peter tells us that we are to live as free people, yet without using our freedom as a pretext for evil. We are to live as servants of God. Being free is somehow dependent on our living as servants of God. As a community of believers, we are to take on the characteristics of servanthood.

The primary meaning of Jesus' life was that he was the servant of God, closely aligned with God in order to reveal God to us. It was because Jesus was obedient to the will of God that he represented servanthood. Being a servant required that he do God's will over and above the will of worldly rulers. Being a servant necessitated that Jesus also be a sufferer.

Jesus was the Old Testament fulfillment of the prophecy concerning the suffering servant -- the one despised by the world. As the suffering servant, Christ is essential to us.

Read the Second Corinthians passage again. Watch the interplay between suffering and comfort. Listen for God's part in all this. Watch for the number of times comfort is used.

God is right in there with us -- active with us. We share abundantly in Christ's sufferings and in Christ's comfort. He endures the same suffering we do.

It is very important Christian truth that we are going to have to endure suffering and pain along the road of life. The vocation of the servant is to suffer, and because God is intricately involved in the life of God's people, it is the vocation of God to suffer along with the servant.

The legacy that Christ left us is that we cannot run away from suffering. It is part of our lives. Some of us endure more than others. Some of it is inexplicable; sometimes unfair. But, we have the promise of comfort.

Suffering is a basic insight of our faith. So is comfort. Christianity says that part of being human is to experience crucifixion in our daily lives. We see the human situation as one that builds in pain; crucifixion as part of what it means to be alive.

I have learned both in my personal life and in counseling that we will never learn to be comforted until we learn to deal with our suffering. We will never be able to comfort until we accept suffering as part of our lives. We cannot avoid it or ignore it. What is important is what we do with it. If we deal with suffering it will not overcome us. If we deal with it, we will grow.

Our lives are similar to what William James describes as a bird in flight. We fly for awhile, land on a perch, then return to our flight. We have various levels of awareness. Sometimes we are caught up in the motion of flying; other times, we descend into the darkness. Some of us are in flight; others are standing still.

The Rev. Valerie Anne Bouchard has served as the Associate and Interim Pastor of Good Shepherd Parish MCC, Chicago, IL. She received her Master of Divinity degree from McCormick Theological Seminary.

Suffering is a process that can be overcome, and in overcoming, makes us stronger. What we have learned in overcoming can be passed on to others. We can use our suffering as a form of service. We become servants so we can comfort others.

We are not to run away from pain; we are to acknowledge it. We are not to accept it passively, but deal with it and overcome it through our identification with Christ's sufferings. Our common purpose on earth should be to understand suffering so that we can try to improve some of the conditions that condemn people to lives of unnecessary pain and sorrow.

Our role is to be that of "wounded healers", a phrase borrowed from Henri Nouwen. Our wounds become the source of our becoming healers because we have had the courage to confront suffering. We cannot offer comfort until we have dealt with suffering.

Comfort is a word that has lost much of its New Testament meaning. When the word "comfort" is used, it does not mean a kind of sedative, almost passive pity. It does not mean sitting and holding someone's hand and saying, "yeah, I understand." The other person may have the distinct impression that no one could possibly understand.

The comfort of God is different. The word "comforter" applied to the Holy Spirit means "strengthener". It has the same root as "fortify". We comfort a sufferer when we give that person courage to bear pain and misfortune. Comfort is what sets people back on their feet. The comfort of God says that we can really bear more and handle more than we think we can.

Kahlil Gibran has a marvelous story that helps in an identification with Christ's sufferings. It is a story of Jesus seen through the eyes of the people who knew him. It is the story of Simon and the Cross:

I was on my way to the fields when I saw Him carrying His Cross; and multitudes were following Him. Then I too walked beside Him. His burden stopped Him many a time, for His body was exhausted.

Then a Roman soldier approached me, saying, "Come, you are firm built; carry the cross of this man."

When I heard these words, my heart swelled within me and I was grateful. And I carried His cross.

It was heavy, for it was made of poplar soaked through with the rains of winter. And Jesus looked at me. And the sweat of His forehead was running down upon His beard.

Again He looked at me and He said, "Do you too drink this cup? You shall indeed sip its rim with me to the end of time."

So saying, He placed His hand upon my free shoulder. And we walked together towards the Hill of the Skull.

But now I felt not the weight of the cross. I felt only His hand. And it was like the wing of a bird upon my shoulder.

Then we reached the hill top, and there they were to crucify Him. And then I felt the weight of the tree. He uttered no word when they drove the nails into His hands and feet, nor made He any sound. And his limbs did not quiver under the hammer.

It seemed as if His hands and feet had died and would only live again when bathed in blood. Yet it seemed also as if He sought the nails as the prince would seek the sceptre; and that He craved to be raised to the heights.

And my heart did not think to pity Him. For I was too filled with wonder. Now the man whose cross I carried has become my cross.

Should they say to me again, "Carry the cross of this man," I would carry it till my road ended in the grave.

But I would beg Him to place His hand upon my shoulder.

This happened many years ago; and still whenever I follow the furrow in the field, and in that drowsy moment before sleep, I think always of that Beloved Man.

And I feel His winged hand, here, on my left shoulder.

Kahlil Gibran *Jesus, Son of Man*

The legacy of Christ is that suffering allows us to be comforters. We can use our suffering to benefit other people. If we truly understand Christ, it is not the suffering we will remember -- it is the joy. ". . And I feel His winged hand, here, on my left shoulder. . ."

If one were to read Dorothee Soelle's book *Suffering*[1] it would be very clear that the author underscores the need for Christians to understand their vocation to be that of sufferers. It should be because one claims Christ that one suffers, yet the author reminds us that Christians have sought to conquer or misdirect suffering rather than *faithfully* seek for the meaning of suffering in their lives.

Christianity is a religion that has endeavored to comfort the afflicted by denying the true composition of suffering instead of afflicting the comfortable by virtue of a faith that calls Christians to align with the oppressed, downtrodden, and forgotten of the world. *The keynote to a Christian existence is the church's position on justice in the world.*

Many of us have experienced broken-openness before God. Whether we can claim that experience as an asset or a liability makes all the difference in the world. Claiming suffering is the ticket by which we enter the human condition, for we are surrounded by oppression and injustice. Again it is important to say that our common purpose on earth should be to understand suffering so that we can try to improve some of the conditions that condemn people to lives of unnecessary pain and sorrow.

THE CHURCH IS TO RISK SIDING WITH THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED REGARDLESS OF COST. WE ARE TO BE DELIVERED FROM OPPRESSION TO SUFFERING!

The wounds that we bear, both our own and others, come as a result of our faithfulness. The model for our faith is to be found throughout the New Testament. Jesus died for the sins of the many who were not able to follow faithfulness to its logical conclusion - death on the cross. Jesus was persecuted and died at the hands of those who were threatened by a faithfulness that questioned and undermined oppression and injustice wherever it existed.

And what is the mandate of each Christian as it has been given us through Paul? We as individuals are to participate in dying and rising with Christ (Rom 6). We are to die with Christ in order to rise with Christ.

What does faith call us to do? If we accept the role of wounded healer and realize that faithfulness is our calling, then the church's task is prophetic witness. The church is to risk siding with those who are oppressed regardless of cost. *We are to be delivered from oppression to suffering!*

Where do we look for God? In the places we would least like to find God. It is clear where the church needs to be. The church needs to be with the oppressed. We need to put some hard questions to ourselves. Do we as individuals have the courage to take personal risks in order to gain God's favor . . . not the world's favor?

Is the church with the oppressed, or has the church made an unholy alliance with affluence at the risk of directly or indirectly contributing to oppression?

For Dorothee Soelle, the cross is the ultimate symbol of reality. The cross is the symbol that blocks all efforts at liberation. There is no self-righteousness or glory in suffering itself, but there is glory in suffering because one sides with the oppressed — not the oppressor. Ultimate glory is the resurrection event, and the hope of the life of a Christian is the possibility of resurrection in daily events.

As Dorothee Soelle puts it, "Christianity is the morality of slaves who deny and destroy the values of masters."[2]

Faithfulness is the key to unlock the tension between those values of the world and those values of God that happen to be in conflict with each other. God's ways are not our ways, and our ways are not God's ways, but faithfulness is to be attentive to God's will.

How do we accomplish faithfulness? We recognize that the resurrection is only possible through the power of love . . . God's love for God's people and our love for God.

Love through the power of the Spirit allows us to risk confrontation. We are to take the risk that, in deciding to confront, it may be our experience that what love can do to hatred is greater than what hatred can do to love.

We have received a radical mandate. We are to give allegiance to one master and we are to serve others without conditions — for the love of the Gospel is unconditional. In that way, we become ambassadors for Christ, through the power of the Spirit for the greater honor and glory of God.

To be human means that we have the capacity to communicate ourselves -- not just something outside ourselves. Speech is what enables us to communicate ourselves. Individuals speak, come together to form larger communities and participate in a symbolic reality structure termed "language." Language allows the individual to transcend self in order to talk of a panorama of things.

The ability to communicate makes us autonomous and responsible. In a very vital way, we bear the responsibility for our autonomy. Autonomy and responsibility have something to do with our being human.

Jurgen Habermas, in his book *Knowledge and Human Interests*, would tell us that our search for the meaning of autonomy and responsibility in our lives can be derived logically from language.[3]

Language is marked by the capacity for symbolic communication. One of Habermas' main theses is that interest through knowledge is language. Language is the link between our interests (that which lies between people and binds them together) and knowledge.

Our knowing is dependent on the language that we use. Knowledge is expressed symbolically. Therefore, our ability to know is based on the symbol systems that we have internalized and come to utilize.

Anthropology, especially psychology, gives us the impetus to say that people are dependent upon love, even if the hints of these needs can be relativized by cultural anthropology. It cannot be established by scientific method why human manipulation or cynical hatred should be better than love.

How can we even begin to talk about why we should bother with anyone else? What does it mean

IF WE TRULY UNDERSTAND CHRIST, IT IS NOT THE SUFFERING WE WILL REMEMBER— IT IS THE JOY

to be an individual in community? When are we establishing ourselves at the expense of others rather than contributing by virtue of our own merits and gifts? How does the individual contribute to the whole? When does individualism become a distortion?

Dostoevsky, in *The Brothers Karamazov*, tells a story that addresses these themes. It goes like this:

Once upon a time, there was a peasant woman and a very wicked woman she was. And she died and did not leave a single good deed behind. The devils caught her and plunged her into the lake of fire. So her guardian angel stood and wondered what good deeds of hers he could remember to tell God. "She once pulled up an onion in her garden," said he, "and gave it to a beggar woman." And God answered: "You take the onion then, hold it out to her in the lake, and let her take hold and be pulled out. And if you can pull her out of the lake, let her come to Paradise, but if the onion breaks, then the woman must stay where she is."

The angel ran to the woman and held out the onion to her. "Come," said he, "catch hold and I'll pull you out." He had just pulled her right out, when the other sinners in the lake, seeing how she was being drawn out, began catching hold of her so as to be pulled out with her. But she was a very wicked woman and she began kicking them. "I'm to be pulled out, not you. It's my onion, not yours." As soon as she said that, the onion broke, and the woman fell into the lake, and she is burning there to this day. So the angel wept and went away.

Fyodor Dostoevsky, The Brothers Karamazov

This woman possesses the disease that characterizes our society — individualism apart from a communal consciousness. She possesses an anxiety that destroys life. She lives without relation to other persons. *Having*, for her, is the most important aspect of life. Even when she is offered a chance to redeem herself, she does not alter her view of life at all; she must have the onion at the expense of others; she is afraid of others and must secure her own survival at all costs. She must save herself by beating down others.

One of the things Dostoevsky is up to is an ontology of good and evil -- the dichotomy between that which draws together, ties, integrates the individual in her/himself and with his/her group, and that which disintegrates and tears apart.

Reality composes both these elements, so the author tells us. Sin could very easily be the separation

of various parts of self, to be fragmented and not to be as fully whole as it is possible for any human to be. Sin is to be scattered.

On a societal level, everything that we grab hold of and cling to means death. Life destroys itself whenever it is based on having, on privileges over against against those who have nothing. Because we grab hold of it, it perishes.

As long as life continues to be grounded and secured in the privilege of having, it destroys itself. Life is only life when everyone belongs to it with equal right and with equal share.

IS THE CHURCH WITH THE OPPRESSED, OR HAS THE CHURCH MADE AN UNHOLY ALLIANCE WITH AFFLUENCE AT THE RISK OF DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY CONTRIBUTING TO OPPRESSION?

The imagery of the story suggests that the more others hang onto the old woman, the more unbreakable the onion becomes. If grabbing hold at the expense of others means death, then sharing and communication means life.

The consequence of community is that no one is an island; no one can be saved or forgiven alone, if we take seriously a sense of being born anew. It is difficult to be human when we are preventing others from full participation in life. No one is free until everyone is free.

Action is the cornerstone upon which ethical creation is based. Hannah Arendt, in her book *The Human Condition*, can help us to clarify our understandings of action. She defined action as the ability to take initiative, to begin, to set something into motion. Actions never achieve their purpose. Rather, actions contribute to the production of stories that characterize personal histories.

With the compilation of personal histories comes the analysis of social and philosophical history. The model for action is the Greek *polis* where *courage* consisted of the ability to express one's self in public.

Courage is the ability to insert one's self into the world in interaction with others that requires the ability to communicate and make decisions. Action is not possible in isolation.

In the continuation of Arendt's thought, the ongoing nature of action is that it forces open all limitations and cuts across all boundaries (boundlessness), and that it is not possible to know the consequences of one's actions (unpredictability). Courage is the ability to accept the consequences of action with the knowledge that it is not possible to foresee the results.

What results in community? A space of appearance that is characterized by power. Hannah Arendt's definition of power: *"Power is actualized only where word and deed have not parted company, where words are not empty and deeds not brutal; where words are not used to veil intentions, but to disclose realities, deeds are not used to violate and destroy but to establish relations and create new realities."*[4]

Whoever chooses not to participate in action is rendered powerless. Power is the component operative in the public realm and is the quality that defines the space of appearance. Power is the lifeblood of a society. Language not only defines us by indicating our interests, but we who have the courage to act have a responsibility toward consistency in word and deed. Language also symbolizes who we are in the sense that authenticity is the result of the proper use of power.

At the end of a course on the "Cultural Revolution and the Church", a group of students at the Ecumenical Institute in Chicago prepared this statement:

Standing before the mystery, a person discovers that each of us has but one life to live — his or her own. To accept that fact, and to live it is to receive grace and to discover that all of life is good. And when we die to our illusions that life is any other way than that, we discover the secret of all life — to die is to live. We are those who name that happening the Jesus Christ Event and reclaim for our time the message of the Biblical people.

This statement is the center of the Gospel message.

Jesus states:

I did not say these things to you from the beginning because I was with you. But now I am going to him who sent me; yet none of you asks me, where are you going? But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your hearts. Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.

John 16:4-7

Jesus is saying to his friends, "I have to go. If I do not go, it will be too easy for you to rely upon me to solve your problems or to answer all your questions for you." Jesus asks his friends, the disciples, to move from visible companionship to inner communion.

You and I have not had the benefit of seeing Jesus personally, but we do have his teachings -- his life — as an example.

Jesus asks us in this passage not just to learn from his teaching, not just to be exposed to a little of his life, but to *internalize* Christ's message.

The only way to internalize that message is for Jesus the Christ to go away so that the Counselor — the Spirit — can enter our lives. The Spirit of truth says Christ will take the things that are mine and declare them to you, pressing them home upon you, enabling you to grasp and appropriate them, leading you into all truth.

We not only imitate some of Jesus' teachings by imagining what Jesus might have said or how he might have responded; we become Christ's disciples by actually internalizing Christ's message into our lives.

When I say Jesus Christ is my Lord and Savior, I in some way bear Christ within me so I can proclaim Christ with my life. I believe that there are two learnings for us when Jesus utters that most significant phrase: "It is to your advantage that I go away."

The first is this image of living out the Good News fully by understanding ourselves as disciples. This is the dimension of Christian vocation.

The primary task and primary mission of the Christian is to call forth the gifts of others. We are not sent into the world in order to make people good. We are not sent to encourage them to do their duty. Ours should be a more wholistic approach.

We know that in some cases, the reason people

have resisted the Gospel is that we have gone out to make people good, to help them do their duty, to impose new burdens on them, rather than calling forth the gift which is the essence of the person.

We are to let others know that God is for them and that they can "be". As Paul says over and over again, we are to build up the community of God's people. We exist to help people know that in their deepest hearts, people can be what they were intended to be and can do what they were meant to do.

As Christians, we are heralds of these good tidings. We live the Good News with our lives. How? By exercising our own gifts. By being the best kind of people we can be, we will inspire others to be like us.

A person who is having a good time doing what she/he is doing has a way of calling forth the depths of another. Such a person *is* Good News. That person is not *saying* the Good News -- that person *is* the Good News. Jesus, by going, challenges us to move from imitation to discipleship.

Then there is the second dimension of going away that speaks to our personal struggles in understanding God. This dimension could be called the absence and presence of God.

I often have the privilege, in counseling, of listening as people recount their personal journeys to me.

Many have related a similar story that goes something like this: "I've spent the last three years working on my prayer life. For the first couple of years, everything was going well. As I prayed, I felt as though I was growing closer and closer to God. I felt good. These last few months, I haven't felt as close. I must be doing something wrong because I feel like I'm very distant from God."

A very basic learning for us is represented in this story: God is not dependent upon our feelings about whether or not God is there. God is always there.

Whether or not we understand God is another thing. There are times when it is necessary for God to be absent from us so that we can reach inside to find the resources to meet God. When we have the feeling that God is absent, it is a time we should reach for new understandings.

Always, when I sense being lost, I know I am engaged in a creative time -- a time that God is going to speak to me in a way I have not seen heard or experienced yet. We cannot manipulate God by believing that God is only there when we think so.

And then there are the things that Jesus leaves with us. He states:

Truly, truly I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy. When a woman is in travail, she has sorrow, because her hour has come; but when she is delivered of the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a child is born into the world. So you have sorrow now, but I will see you again and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you. In that day, you will ask nothing of me. Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask anything of God, God will give it to you in my name. Hitherto, you have asked nothing in my name; ask and you will receive, that your joy may be full.

John 16:20-24

Here is our taste of the promise of Christ to us. Just as the woman in labor is in anguish and then forgets her agony when the child is born, so there is a season of sorrow that is turned into joy.

Why is there joy? There are two reasons: The first revolves around the phrase, "In that day, you will ask nothing of me."

In examination of the text and viewpoints of translators, that phrase means, "In that day, you will ask no more questions because everything will be revealed to you."

That is a tremendous comfort to me now. I am a person who operates by asking a lot of questions. It is a great relief to me to have the promise that in the end day, everything will be made known to me.

The second joy is one of practical help to us this very day. There is that little phrase that is sort of a cliche among Christians: "Hitherto you have asked nothing in my name; ask and you will receive, that your joy may be full."

Remember all the discussion of Jesus' need to go away. "When I have gone and returned," says Jesus, "you will understand me in a new way. Believe that if you ask you will receive."

Roger Hazleton has an inspirational quote that speaks to this issue of asking and receiving. He notes:

Let there be no limit to what we take to God in prayer, so that there may be no limit to God's reign and rule in all of life. It is far better to ask God for whatever we desire than to play God by deciding on our own what we ought to pray for. That would simply be pious magic all over again, wanting to control God by praying for the right things in a way that is sure to get results. God will be the judge; ours is the task of putting everything up to God.

The Treasure Chest: A Heritage Album

Ethical response begins by determining our gifts and offering them to God by offering our gifts to those around us. In that way, it is possible for us to move from imitation to discipleship.

Secondly, we must continue to be led both in the presence and the absence of God. And lastly, ask in all things and we shall receive as Christ's promise to us.

[1] Dorothee Soelle. Suffering. Fortress Press Philadelphia, 1975, p. 155.

[2] Ibid., p. 161.

[3] Jurgen Habermas. Knowledge and Human Interests Beacon Press, Boston, 1968, p. 194.

[4] Hannah Arendt. The Human Condition. The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1958, p. 200.

THE GAY CHRISTIAN

is a journal of theological reflection for the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches. Because it is an open forum for thought, the views expressed in this magazine do not necessarily reflect the position of TGC or of the Fellowship. Also, the appearance of a name in this magazine does not denote sexual orientation. Articles and comments are encouraged and should be addressed to: The Rev. F. Jay Deacon, Box 2390, Chicago, IL 60690.

Editor
F. Jay Deacon

? A Pastoral Challenge Can You Keep My Secret ?

the Rev. Jim N. Dykes
Pastor, MCC West Bay; Pastor - elect, MCC San Francisco

The question of confidentiality is an important one for any member of the clergy. It would be simple if we were all super-ministers and those who came holding out their lives to us were super-people. Reality dictates differently. I shall attempt to look at some of the questions raised in the context of pastoral counseling and confidentiality. The focus on this article will revolve on two ideas: First, what is pastoral care, and secondly, how is trust related to confidentiality.

The word pastor[1] has an ancient history. The role of pastor arose in the nomadic stage of tribal life.[2] The person the tribe looked to in time of hurt and pain was the medicine man (woman) or witch doctor. That person became the authority in the community on the mysteries of life, death, health, magic, religion, danger, sickness, drought, and enemies, from within as well as without. Everyone signaled for the help of this three-in-one person. This woman or man was the ancestor of the priest, the physician, and the pastor. "As priest he(she) wrestled with evil spirits and prayed to the great spirit on behalf of his(her) people. As physician he(she) employed chants and incantations with prescientific instruments to heal the sick and drive away death. As pastor he(she) counseled with people on the destinies of life and death, listening to their troubles in the wisdom revealed to him (her).[3]

OUT OF INSECURITY IN THIS IMPORTANT ROLE AS CARETAKER OF THE SOUL, MANY CLERGY STILL THINK OF THEMSELVES AS PHYSICIANS.

The Latin root from which the word pastor is derived, *pascere*, denotes a desire to return to that nomadic, and later agricultural, environment. *Pascere* means to pasture, or feed.

The concept of the pastor as shepherd is scriptural. A favorite psalm of Jew and Christian begins, "The Lord is my Shepherd." Isaiah describes the role of the pastor in flowing words, "He shall feed His flock like a shepherd; He shall gather the lambs with His arm and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are young." (Isa. 60:11) One last reference to the pastor as shepherd comes from the stern charge to all religious leaders from Jeremiah, "Shame on the shepherds who let the sheep of my flock scatter and be lost! says the Lord. Therefore these are the words of the Lord, the God of Israel, about the shepherds who tend my people: You have scattered and dispersed my flock. You have not watched over them; but I am watching you to punish you for your evil doings, says the Lord. I will myself gather the remnant of my sheep from all the lands to which I have dispersed them. I will bring them back to their homes, and they shall be fruitful and increase. I will appoint shepherds to tend them; they shall never again know fear or dismay or punishment. This is the word of the Lord." (Jer. 23: 1-4 NEB)

The New Testament is so full of the analogy of pastor as shepherd, only two will be cited. Jesus is referred to as the good shepherd. The good shepherd is always on guard for danger that could affect the flock. John 10:11 states, "The good shepherd giveth His life for the sheep."

The pastor then, is the person in a community to whom the people turn with their souls; that is to say, that part of their person which has spiritual dimensions. Out of insecurity in this important role as caretaker of the soul, many clergy still think of themselves as physicians. In reality, if we can grasp the importance of our role as pastor, the tendency for professional role confusion dissipates.

What then *is* this important role in society? The pastor is the person responsible for pastoral care. In other words, pastoral care is synonymous with the entire ministry. "Everything a minister does is pastoral care."[4]

The awesomeness of this concept of pastoral care visa vis the pastor is especially relevent in the lesbian and gay population. A disenfranchized group of people have, by definition, lost many of the former systems and structures that hold life in balance. The morality of old does not fit the freedom of a group of people on the growing edge of society. The pastor brings, however, the collective consciousness (See Carl Jung, Man and His Symbols) of humanity. He or she stands as a symbol of the morality that deserted the homosexual person. At the same moment, this tension collides with his or her own person, producing one of two results: one, an attempt to return to the familiarity of the old morality; or two, a total abandonment of moral codes and rules. The MCC pastor then stands in the midst of this turmoil and is asked, "Can I trust you with my secret?"

THE PASTOR BRINGS, HOWEVER, THE COLLECTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS OF HUMANITY. HE OR SHE STANDS AS A SYMBOL OF THE MORALITY THAT DESERTED THE HOMOSEXUAL PERSON.

This brings us to the second point of discussion of trust. The work of Erick Erickson on ego development is of particular significance for pastoral care.[5] Erickson sees the first crisis in ego development as that of trust or mistrust. This crisis occurs during the first year of life, coinciding with the time in which sexual identity is beginning to develop. As will be discussed later, this is a very crucial time for the emerging gay or lesbian personality. This attitude pervades both the surface and the depth of the personality. In other words, trust or mistrust is not only a conscious experience, but pervades the unconscious level as well. "The impairment of basic trust in infancy is experienced as a sense of mistrust. Mistrust, which is a form of anxiety, makes it impossible

continued on page 28

The Rev. Jean White

Profile Of A Christian

Donna J. Wade

She entered the room, smiling, And I felt as though I were greeting an old friend rather than meeting a new one. Through the course of our conversation, I discovered that she is a quiet person, but it's the type of quietness that is born of a spiritual assuredness rather than shyness or timidity. Jean White has devoted her life to serving the Lord, whom she loves so deeply. Though God's will has directed her, at times, into diverse areas of service, the Rev. White's commitment to a life as God's servant has been consistently demonstrated through her personal integrity and unwavering concern for others.

Born in a suburb of Greater London in 1941, raised in an evangelical home, the Rev. White became a Christian in her early teens. Upon completion of her general nursing degree, she trained for the mission field at the International Bible Training Institute.

The Rev. Jean White (right) and her spouse, Chris.

The Rev. White served from 1963-69 as a medical missionary to Macau, S.E. Asia, a Portuguese colony on the mainland of China. Upon her return to England in 1969, Jean first learned of MCC:

"When I came home from the mission field, I really knew I was gay. I met somebody through some friends, and went out with her, for the first time, to a gay club. I was seen coming out of the club by some people who were distributing tracts (flyers) in the area. They turned me in to the mission, and they gave me an option. If I accepted that I was gay, I had to leave, but I had my furlough year to make up my mind. During that year, I became very low, and I met an Anglican Dean who had heard on the radio that Troy Perry and Norman Pittenger were holding a meeting in London -- he thought it would be a good thing for me to be taken along. So, I went with him, and I've been with MCC all along."

The Rev. White is the first woman to pastor MCC London, a small, spirited congregation, averaging 50 in attendance for Sunday worship. The Rev. White believes that she will be an effective minister for the congregation, partly because she *"never asks anyone to do anything that I wouldn't do myself."*

The attitudes, politically and religiously, toward gays in England were once very liberal. The situation has changed, however, and the Rev. White commented on opposition to MCC London, and the effects of that opposition on MCC's outreach:

"They (attitudes) were quite liberal until we got a new Chief of Police, and he's trying to clean up London -- making bars close at 11 p.m. and hounding a lot of gay clubs. As far as MCC's concerned, we've had a lot of opposition from people within the Church. The Bishop of London once kept us from getting the building we wanted. And, of course, Mary Whitehouse (England's Anita Bryant) and the Festival of Light group doesn't like us.

"We have very few women in the London Church, and I don't know why. Probably because a lot of women intergrate very well in the ordinary churches. And we don't have many clubs for women, therefore there isn't the same way to meet them. You can't go evangelizing in quite the same way among women as among the men. There used to be clubs, and we used to go -- we had more women active then, but some of them have moved off to other universities etc."

Despite her up bringing in a strict religious sect which was against women preaching and teaching, the Rev. White has always felt a calling to minister.

"We could be missionaries, so I always grew up with the idea that I wanted to be a missionary. I felt the Lord calling me from a very young age, and I thought I would go to Africa. I was engaged to a Dutch doctor, and he went on to Africa just before the Congo rebellion. I was to go and join him, but during that time, hundreds of missionaries were massacred. It was during that time that I found out I was gay, anyway. So the Lord had His hand in that. While I was at Bible School, the missionary societies came around explaining about their missions, and I felt called to the Overseas Missionary Fellowship. I've always had a call, but when I came back, I didn't know what to do about it.

"Don't get me wrong -- I didn't go into the mission

continued on page 28

COMMUNICATIONS! G=A=P

by Donna J. Wade

Since the early days of the church, the people of the UFMCC have taken seriously the commission to "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations". Reaching out beyond the boundaries of the North American continent, and spreading the "good news" have become important aspects of the UFMCC's ministry.

The General Conference voted to take a yearly, Fellowship-wide, special offering, to help finance the outreach into other areas of the world. Evangelism Sunday for 1979 is February 4, and members and friends in each MCC church are asked to contribute to this ministry. In an effort to promote a better understanding of the structure of MCC's outreach to other areas, the following is a simplified explanation of the work of the Board of World Church Extension (WCE).

The Board of WCE is comprised of an Executive Secretary, the District Coordinators of Australasia and Canada, a Church Extension Officer from the United Kingdom and Western Europe, and a member-at-large from the USA, appointed by the Board of Elders (this position is currently vacant).

These positions are held by the Rev. Elder Freda Smith, the Rev. Jan Weymouth, the Rev. David Gunton, and the Rev. Jose von Buhler, respectively.

The Board of WCE functions almost like a District Board of Home Missions (which is charged with the responsibility of directing the life and growth of study groups and missions in its area) for all areas not within recognized UFMCC Districts. The only difference is that District Boards meet once or twice yearly, while the Board of WCE meets during General Conferences, which are biennial.

The purpose of the Board of WCE is recorded in Article VI.D of the UFMCC By-Laws, which reads, in part: "The Board of World Church Extension shall be directed by the Board of Elders to continue to develop an outreach in response to interested groups throughout the world."

The Board of Elders, whose task it is to interpret the By-Laws, have defined "to develop an outreach" as follows:initiating correspondence with interested persons and groups throughout the world; informing them of the aims and goals of the UFMCC; encouraging them to form groups identifying themselves as a part of the UFMCC; and identifying and training persons in the area who have the qualifications to pastor and serve as administrators of UFMCC groups.

One responsibility of the Board of WCE is the development of a resource packet pertinent to MCC's ministry, in various languages, and distribution of the packets to those interested in an MCC outreach in their areas.

Another responsibility of the Board is to establish a structure to coordinate all groups within a world church extension area. Any area that houses an MCC outreach, but does not lie geographically within a recognized UFMCC district, is a church extension area (CEA).

The most organized CEA in the Fellowship is the United Kingdom and Western Europe. The area grew so quickly that an administrative body was formed to handle all of the correspondence, inquiries, and other organizational duties. This body is the Church Extension Committee. (See diagram of structure)

The Church Extension Committee functions in the UK and Europe much like a District Board of Home Missions. They confer no less than quarterly to discuss mutual goals, establish new study groups, and handle any other business regarding the outreach in that area. The CEC is chaired by the Church Extension Officer, whose duties are similar to those of a District Coordinator. They include: representing the Board of Elders; recommending candidates for the professional ministry to the MCAC; implementing new Study Groups and appointing Worship Coordinators for Study Groups and Missions; and visiting in local congregations, advising clergy and laity of, and insuring compliance with, the By-Laws and directives of the General Conference.

The work of the Board of World Church Extension has provided the framework through which we have begun to carry out the Gospel's commission, and our Fellowship has prospered through this outreach. And this is only a beginning. The efforts of the Board have been hampered, however, by a lack of available financial resources. Try to remember this on February 4, when you are asked to give a little more than usual. It is a worthy investment, one through which you will be truly blessed. †

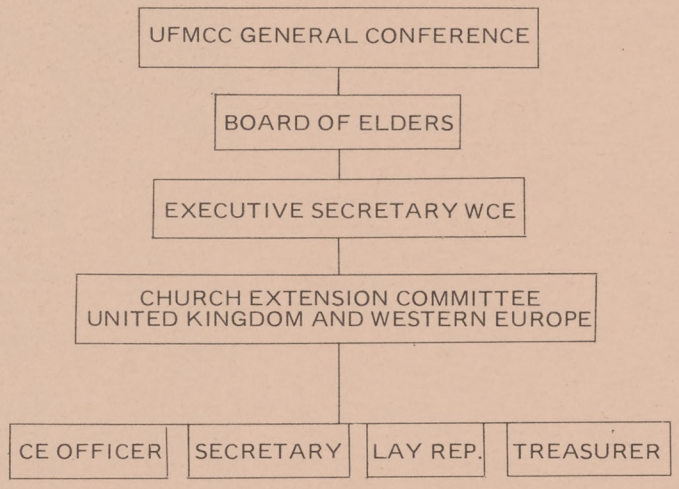

Diagram of the structure of the Church Extension Committee of the United Kingdom and Western Europe.

NEW PASTORS ELECTED

[Please see Fellowship Family section for others]

The Rev. Sky Anderson has been elected Interim Pastor of MCC San Jose, CA.

The Rev. Joseph Houle has been elected to pastor MCC Pittsburgh, PA.

The Rev. Karen Linstrom has been chosen to pastor MCC Melbourne, Australia.

The Rev. Frank Scott and the Rev. Clifford Turpin have been selected to co-pastor MCC of Tidewater in Richmond, VA.

The Rev. Charles Larsen was elected Pastor of MCC of the Resurrection, Houston, TX.

THREE CHURCHES CHARTERED

All Saint's MCC (West Hollywood, CA) was chartered 11-15-78, and is pastored by the Rev. Elder Jim Sandmire.

MCC Providence, RI was chartered 10-21-78, and is pastored by the Rev. Marge Ragona.

Alpha and Omega MCC (Brooklyn, NY) was chartered 10-29-78, and is pastored by the Rev. Dee Jackson. †

News Composite

In this column, Pat Townson presents short interviews and information of interest to our community. Coverage includes the happenings in the political, social, and religious arenas. Mr. Townson encourages our readers to submit brief summaries and/or clippings, etc. of matters pertinent to our community. Address any correspondence to Mr. Townson at POB 1003, Chicago, IL, 60690.

SHADES OF JOE MCCARTHY

Briggs, Briggs, Briggs!!! It's been on my mind almost continually the past several days, and the newspapers in this part of the country are editorializing against the foolishness of it all. Now we will have to see if the voters of California feel the same way.

(Editor's note: The Briggs Initiative was soundly defeated, with 58% of the voters opposing this attempt to limit the rights of gay individuals.)

THOUGHTS FROM READERS

C. M. from Midland, TX wrote to me saying that being stuck in a small town made it hard to get access to gay news around the country. C. M. asked what I could recommend. Well, of course the *Advocate*, out of San Mateo, CA is *the* paper for the community; not that all of us agree all the time with what David Goodstein and his staff have to say, but the *Advocate's* outreach is so wide, and its newsgathering resources so plentiful, that we can hardly afford not to read it. Also, C. M. and other readers would do well to request information from the National Gay Task Force, 80 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10011. They send out monthly bulletins full of news from all over the country. Finally, C. M., order a copy of *Gayellow Pages*, direct from the publisher. The price is $5 per copy, and this remarkable directory, with just about everything gay listed, is now in its "nth" revision and printing. Hundreds of gay publications are available, some free for the asking, and they are all listed in *Gayellow Pages*. Write the publisher, Renaissance House, Box 292, Village Station, New York, NY 10014.

For C. M. and others with poor or no contacts in the community, try calling the new National Gay Switchboard. Peg Cruikshank, a staff member of the Switchboard, says this new project of the Human Rights Foundation, Inc. is the first national phone line available to lesbians and gay men anywhere. They are waiting to talk to you, 24 hours daily. Call toll free at 800-652-1442, or in California call 800-227-0888. And wish them a lot of luck with this ambitious project.

(Editor's Note: The Switchboard began operation October 1 to provide badly needed accurate information about gay sexuality and lifestyles. A fifteen-year-old daughter of a lesbian, a 65 year old man who has spent all his life in the military hiding his gay feelings, and a man who accidentally found his teenaged son having sex with a boyfriend were among the more than 400 people who made use of the Switchboard during its first week of operation. According to Sabrina Sojourner, Public Information Director for the Switchboard, calls originated from such diverse places as Park City, UT; Macomb, IL; Florence, MA; and Atlanta, GA. Overall, calls were received from 34 states.)

ON THE SUBJECT OF BOOKS

Two for your review, both getting cautious, guarded reactions from the gay community. The first is *Homosexuality: A Symbolic Confusion* by Ruth Tiffany Barnhouse; the second is *The Gay Theology* by Ken Philpott. Barnhouse works very hard, without much success, in my opinion, to destroy the arguments of MCC and other gay religious organizations who assert that the Bible is not against homosexuality. Barnhouse calls homosexuality a failure to achieve the *Christian goal of completeness*. While she continually asserts that homosexuality is sin, she believes it *cannot possibly be as distasteful to the sight of God as the self-righteous hostility of the Christians who persecute homosexuals*. While half a loaf is sometimes better than none, I am inclined to let Barnhouse keep her half loaf to herself. Philpott, on the other hand, does not bother to debate the issue, nor make any concession at all. His entire focus is on *the homosexual who is trying to cope with his old nature, through faith in Jesus Christ*. Philpott says we gays should go straight, in the process of getting saved. Although he makes no claims about having *formerly* been gay, he reminds me a lot of G.C., an ex-gay-activist out of Washington, D.C. An involved member of the Mattachine Society for several years in the sixties, G.C. found Christ around 1970. He promptly dropped his Mattachine affiliation, and formed the very diabolical *Liberation House* in Arlington, VA. Advertisements began appearing everywhere, including the *Advocate*, offering true liberation for gay people everywhere. Now, the phrases *Gay Liberation* and *liberation for gay people* sound a lot alike, so many people sent in for the literature, only to receive some pamphlets from *Liberation House* espousing the virtues of becoming heterosexual, or at least refraining from homosexual activity, as a born-again Christian. Of course, he offered to pray for the correspondent, to help him/her in overcoming homosexual desires. I cannot offer any rationale for this next, purely personal opinion, but it seems to me that gay people who were born *in the church* so to speak, of religious families, tend to stay with the "gay" churches later in life, if they stay religious at all. On the other hand, gay people born *outside the church*, who later come to a realization of Christ as their Savior, tend to go the Philpott/G.C. direction, and renounce homosexuality as a sin. Any reader comments on this? If you want to follow up on the books I mentioned, Barnhouse is published by Seabury Press, and Philpott is published by Logos, in paperback. Inquire at your local religious bookstore.

FIGHTING FIRE WITH A FIRE EXTINGUISHER

Next issue in this space, I will tell you about a worthwhile service you can perform for the community right in your own home, with a good quality shortwave radio receiver. I'll be talking about WYCA, (the Christian Gospel Station out of Hammond, Indiana), Radio HCJB, Quito Equador, and talk shows in general. Do tune in!! †

Patrick Townson

The Fellowship Family

NEWS AND NOTES OF MCC PEOPLE AND EVENTS AROUND THE WORLD

LAFAYETTE, LOUISIANA

Brothers and sisters residing in the heart of the French-speaking region of Louisiana known as *Acadiana* have requested the establishment of an MCC in that area. Responding to this need, MCC New Orleans Pastor Ron Pannell conducted the first worship service and organizational meeting on October 29.

The group's immediate goal is to become an official Study Group in the UFMCC South Central District.

Mr. Ken Williams, a spokesperson for the Acadiana group, said that they are thankful for the vision God has given to the Rev. Elder Perry, and the people of the UFMCC. He indicated that the group in Lafayette has, for some time, been aware of the accomplishments of the UFMCC through God's answers to prayers.

The people of MCC Acadiana stated that *through the prayers of many, we are proud to attest to the fact that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is now being spread, with no discrimination, to all persons in Acadiana.* †

ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

Dr. Malcolm Boyd and the Rev. Elder Carol Cureton joined the Rev. David Pelletier and the congregation of MCC St. Louis to observe the fifth anniversary of its ministry with a five-day celebration, November 1-5.

Leaders of the gay and religious communities gathered to hear Dr. Boyd, the principal speaker at MCC's *Rally For Rights*, November 4. Rounding out the celebration were a congregational dinner and special worship services.

The first service of the church was held October 28, 1973, under the leadership of the Rev. Cureton, then an Exhorter from MCC-LA. The Rev. Cureton delivered the sermon at the Festival of Worship, November 5.

MCC St. Louis begins its sixth year of ministry to the community with a new Pastor, having elected the Rev. Roy Birchard by an overwhelming majority, October 29.

The Rev. David Pelletier, Interim Pastor prior to the election of the Rev. Birchard, accepted a call to pastor MCC Eugene, OR, and assumed those duties in late November. †

SAMARITAN THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE TO GRANT DEGREES

Samaritan Theological Institute, the educational institution of the UFMCC, has been recognized by the State of California, Department of Education, as a religious educational institution operating under the exemption of California Education Code Section 94303(b). This entitles STI to confer "exempted" degrees upon its graduates. The basic STI degree will be a Bachelor of Theology, and will signify completion of 120 credits (sixty prior college credits and sixty STI credits). This granting of Bachelor's degrees does not mean that STI is authorized, approved, or accredited by the state or any regional accrediting body. The Institute does not, at present, have the assets or the full-time faculty and staff to qualify for any other state status. STI credits and degrees are recognized only within the UFMCC.

For information about admission to STI, courses in residence, correspondence courses, and seminars, contact:

The Rev. Jeffrey Pulling, Dean
5300 Santa Monica Blvd., Suite 104
Los Angeles, CA, 90029

WASHINGTON, D.C.

MCC-DC HAS VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Pastor Larry Uhrig has shared a vision for the future of MCC-DC with the congregation, and members and friends responded with well over $70,000 in cash, checks, and pledges, as an initial commitment to that vision.

In a letter to members and friends, the Rev. Uhrig shared his thoughts on this vision:

"I believe that we are being called by the New Testament Ministry of Jesus to fulfill the calling to 'Feed my sheep', to care for all persons around us, to 'Give to all who beg from you', and to present the opportunity for all to confess Jesus Christ as Lord.

"The Vision presented to the congregation is a direction and intention that commits us to the building of a self-supporting, multi-purpose facility. This facility will provide living space for retired persons, space for worship, feeding people, housing for street persons, many community activities, and offices. As you read these words, do not be troubled by the specifics; this is an articulation of the Vision, not a blueprint. There is no limit to this Vision, no boundaries to our proclamation of the Gospel, as long as we move in faith and trust that the Lord provides for all our needs." †

AUSTRALASIA INVITES CONFERENCE VISITORS

The Rev. Jan Weymouth, District Coordinator, announces the invitation for visitors to attend the Australasian District Conference, December 29 to January 1 in Sydney, Australia. The conference site is the Naamaroo Conference Centre, Lady Game Drive in Chatswood, ten kilometers from central Sydney. Approximately 100 persons from New Zealand and Australia are expected to attend.

The Trans-Australia Airlines are booked as the travel organizers for the conference. Further information can be requested from the District Office, 62 Toorak Road West, South Yarra, Victoria, 3141, Australia. †

RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA

The Cooperative Campus Ministry program at North Carolina State University has fully accepted the Rev. Willie White, minister of St. John's MCC, as a member.

About ten other ministers are involved in the student ministry at the university. The action gives ecumenical recognition to the work which White and St. John's have been doing among students, and paves the way for more open Christian ministry on the campus, White said. This marks the first time an openly gay minister has worked with CCM. †

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

Ever since the Evangelistic Team was here last year, *The Family of God* has been our closing hymn. It is a song that describes our congregation. We have spiritually grown as a family; we do not invite people to church any longer, but invite them to join our family in worship.

Many things have happened in Minneapolis. We are negotiating for a church home, with an enthusiastic, committed congregation, and in the weeks since the building was presented and voted on, we have taken historically high offerings. Fund raisers, rummage sales, raffles, and solicitations are in full force. Through all of this, this congregation has managed to keep Jesus Christ in the center of their lives.

Last winter, a number of our 'gay parents' took a giant step toward understanding, by honestly relating their feelings to the Hennipen County Court System, in an in-service training session. From that involvement came a Minnesota Court landmark decision, in which a lesbian was awarded custody of her three boys. Our people take pride in knowing that some of their input influenced that decision.

Thanks to the Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson's *Operation Resurrection*, this congregation has formulated a church covenant, which has become extremely important to them. It was a spiritual day for us, with the entire congregation participating in the planning of the church programs. Every three months, we revisit *Operation Resurrection*, and plan the next three months. So our congregation is planning the church programs, seminars, and socials, leaving the Pastor free to pastor, the Board free to administrate.

Sandy Breitmayer, Clark Bufkin, Hal Hasse, Carol Fremont, and the Pastor formed a Human Services Team, to study church conflict and mediation. We prepared a four-hour presentation for our District Conference in Wichita. The team received a standing ovation, and the delegates voted to have another six-hour seminar at the Fall conference in Des Moines, where it was also a success.

As a congregation, we are learning how to spot conflicts before they escalate, and we are proud to say that people are now getting together and working out problems before they start; and, more importantly, people are not leaving the church over real, or imagined, hurts.

Our Prison Ministry has set some precedents. Volunteers have been approved to bring people to our church services. We have also conducted worship services at the prison. The Rev. Johnson conducted a four-week seminar on sexuality at the prison in November. This seminar dealt with homosexuality, incest, child abuse, sexuality in the prison system, and how they all can relate to chemical dependency. The Rev. Marge Peterson, who is the Chaplain of the Minnesota Women's Correctional Institution at Shakopee, will be delivering a Sunday message to our congregation in the future.

We have taken to the local radio station, to talk about transgender problems. Carol Fremont is working in this area, and by General Conference we should have some interesting insights and understandings to share regarding transgender persons.

We were invited to discuss homosexuality at the United Church of Christ, and were well-received. We have also been approached for a pulpit exchange by that church.

Our Deacon and Exhorter training programs, as well as our Inquirers' class, are in full swing. Any person may enroll in the Inquirers' class, but it is a requirement for any person intending to become a Deacon or Exhorter candidate. It is a twelve week course that deals with the Gospels, how we got the Bible, the sacraments and their historical significance, and homosexuality and the Bible. Other areas explored in the class are Christian leadership, UFMCC Structure and By-Laws, and inclusive language. We would like to share our program with other churches. Just write to 2830 Cedar Ave., Minneapolis, MN, 55407, for information.

This Thanksgiving we held our third Ecumenical Service, in conjunction with Dignity, Integrity, and Lutherans Concerned. The service was a "lay persons" service, followed by a Thanksgiving Dinner, open to all who had no place to go on this special holiday. We also enjoyed a "Homecoming Dance" in November, held in conjunction with MCC St. Paul, MN.

In a wonderful expression of love, the Board of Directors sent the Pastor on a two week sabbatical, when the Rev. Johnson's father died in September. The Board paid her airfare to Los Angeles.

Minneapolis MCC has come of age, and is ready to take its place in the committed roster of churches in the UFMCC. MCC Minneapolis has truly become a "Family of God." †

J.J.

ADELAIDE, AUSTRALIA

In mid-1978, Adelaide MCC moved into new facilities located on one of the main streets. Since moving in, various members have donated lighting, carpets, and a new electronic organ. The Rev. Renee Hein was elected as Interim Pastor of the Mission, and has organized regular semester training for people interested in future ministry and local leadership. New outreaches have been established with local gay groups, and a 'Gay Old Summertime' Fair is planned for the near future, sponsored by coordinating gay groups. A new telephone answering service now enable the church to deal with emergency calls on a 24-hour basis. †

Pastor Joan Johnson (second from left) during Ecumenical Thanksgiving Day dinner, jointly sponsored by MCC Minneapolis, Dignity, Integrity, and Lutherans Concerned.

SAN MIGUEL DE ALLENDE, MEXICO

Editor's Note: The San Miguel Project, according to their brochure, "offers you the opportunity simply to "be" among other loving and supportive people who are also simply "being". While this retreat community has not been officially recognized by the UFMCC Board of Elders as an MCC work, the Rev. Rhea Miller, an MCC minister, has been instrumental in the establishment of this center. Possibilities of experience within the Project include meditation, community building, intensive language study, independent study projects, and workshops geared for specialized groups (such as alcohol rehabilitation. For further information regarding activities and tuition rates, contact the US Project Headquarters: 1520 Euclid, Boulder, Colorado 80302.

Humility is born here.
Born within the awesome power of God.
Within the gentle embrace of this loving Friend.

On this rainy day, San Miguel de Allende is so much more than a vision; we are a reality. There are four of us here now, not including Jose and Cuca. Why God has given us this time alone is a question we never ask. It does not matter why. What matters is that we are here, experiencing a loving community, soon to grow even larger, into a healing balm for all who visit and live here.

As we came over the last hill and could see San Miguel waiting for us, the realization that we were home was so heavy on my heart that the tears formed in my eyes. San Miguel de Allende actually exists!

Special things are happening here. Try for a moment to separate yourself from life as you know it, and think instead of a Mexican woman sitting in the stream of mineral water, washing clothes and a naked baby. Picture colorful pieces of clothing drying on cacti along the stream, as other mothers follow the ritual. Picture cobblestone streets, full of dirt and diesel and small faces staring out at you from behind wooden doors in adobe buildings. Picture a fiesta in the town square, burros, bicycles, and buses for transportation, only a few cars. Picture a narrow Mexican street, busy and dusty, and then see yourself walking through a door into a beautiful garden of trees, grass, flowers, butterflies, and quiet. This is the "compound", degrees cooler than the street, yet radiating warmth.

Special things are happening here. It is an emptying process, a purification from the old, and an awakening to the tenderness that we were meant to enjoy. It is the realization that there is much to learn, much that we have forgotten, and much that we can teach. It is a struggle in "being" without outside distractions and earthly definitions getting in the way. We are no longer only a minister, a teacher, an administrator, an artist, we are all of these and more.

Special things are happening here — a worship service by candlelight on Sunday evening; a circle of prayer on Monday; tears of emptiness and fullness coming as one; support, acceptance, love and nurturing; being able to write, make hammocks and blankets, and learn Spanish; common meals, shared concerns, shoulders to cry on and friends to laugh with; space, personal time and space for you and God.

Special things are happening here. God is preparing a place for God's people — for those who are tired and have lost touch with who they are, people who see only pain and struggle for their lives, people who have something to share whether they know it or not, people who long to learn of a humility that breathes life instead of guilt.

God will be sending people here to recharge them with the healing light of love, compassion, and faith, creating a people reborn, ready to return to where God calls, ready to serve.

As God speaks to you, join the San Miguel Community in your prayers, support, and your presence. †

Charla Wistos

CALGARY, CANADA

A lot of work was involved in preparing for MCC Calgary's first birthday. Invitations were extended, and among our guests were members of MCC Edmonton and their Pastor, the Rev. David Gunton. The Rev. Larry Gauer, who is Co-Pastor of MCC Vancouver, joined us in our celebrations, and was the guest speaker for the Sunday service.

Our guests from Edmonton began the weekend by treating our congregation to cocktails at the Unitarian Hall, prior to the dance. Everyone became acquainted with each other, and those of us who had offered to billet out of town people were introduced to our guests.

Everyone pitched in to help with decorating and cleaning the hall, and the Anniversary Dance was a smashing success! Close to 200 men and women attended, and a fantastic time was had by all.

Our refreshment ticket sellers came up with a brain wave, and a kissing booth was set up. Thanks to many generous donors, our altar-set fund was $50 richer.

Later on in the evening, Calgary's Empress, Deanna-Marie, and two other charming people, put on an impromtu show, bringing in donations of $200 to be sent to Seattle, to help fight Initiative 13.

Sunday morning, the theatre used for church services every week filled up quickly. The Rev. Gunton, who is the District Coordinator, installed the Rev. Lloyd Greenway as Interim Pastor. He, in turn, installed the new Board of Directors. In his sermon, the Rev. Gauer challenged all of us to carry on the work of this church in God's way, not in ours.

To end the weekend, a pot luck buffet was served, and we all sat down to a feast of a wide variety of dishes, and champagne.

Yes, a lot of planning and hard work went into our celebration, but it was well worth it. And as I left, I actually heard enthusiastic members discussing next year's events!

Reprinted with permission from *New Wine*, a publication of MCC Calgary, Canada.

KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

MCCKC PLANNING AHEAD

Pastor Jim Glyer has appointed a new committee, whose task is crucial to that church's future. The Long Range Planning Committee has been established as an agency to help the congregation arrive at answers to questions regarding future growth.

The committee, which meets weekly, has formulated a series of questions for congregational discussion. These questions include:

* Is there a desirable maximum size for MCCKC?
* Do we look forward to an all-professional staff? If not, what portion of the church's work is to be done by volunteers? How are these persons to be found and trained?
* How will MCCKC deal with the issue of feminism?
* Who are we? Gay? Christian? Gay Christians?
* Will MCCKC reach out to the non-gay community? If so, how?
* How about the futures of our older members? Retirement homes, etc.

continued on page 26

Fighting The Good Fight

MCC AT BOISE PASTOR EXCOMMUNICATED
(From The Mormon Church)

The Rev. Ken Storer had hoped to promote understanding of MCC and its outreach through an interview with the *Idaho Statesman*, and many brothers and sisters have become a part of the Boise community as a result of the interview. An unexpected result, however, was Storer's excommunication from the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints (Mormon).

In late September, following publication of the *Statesman* interview, a letter from the LDS Church was hand-delivered to the Rev. Storer at the Boise MCC. The letter was a summons from the Church, requesting Storer's appearance before a High Council Court for investigation of his conduct *in violation of the law and order of the Church.* Due to previous commitments, Rev. Storer received a postponement of the hearing until October 8.

The morning after receiving the summons, Rev. Storer was contacted once again by the *Statesman*, this time inquiring about the summons. Rev. Storer read them the entire letter and gave them his reactions to it. The *Statesman* contacted President Grant Ipsen (Stake President, LDS Church), author of the summons, who refused comment. Ipsen contacted the Rev. Storer later that day, stating that the court had been postponed, and that he would be notified of the new date.

The *Statesman* ran an article about the summons the following week, which was picked up by the wire services and distributed. As a result, one of the local television stations conducted and aired an interview with the Rev. Storer. Again, more Christian gays came into contact with the Boise church.

The Rev. Storer sent a letter to Ipsen, advising him that he did want to appear at the hearing, with witnesses. On September 30, another letter was delivered to Storer, indicating that no witnesses would be allowed at the October 8 hearing.

After contacting the Rev. Elder Carol Cureton in LA, the Rev. Storer made the decision not to enter the proceedings without witnesses.

Rev. Storer telephoned Ipsen October 2 to again request the presence of two witnesses throughout his participation. Ipsen requested a private meeting between the two, to which Storer consented.

During their three-hour meeting on October 3, Ipsen expressed his concern about what he saw as excessive and unnecessary media coverage on this issue. The Rev. Storer reminded him that he had chosen to initiate the action, and asked why, if Ipsen felt this action justified, he now had concerns that the action had brought about public attention. Ipsen indicated to the Rev. Storer that he (Ipsen) was the supreme authority for God in that area, and that his actions were not to be questioned by anyone except his superiors.

The Rev. Storer informed Ipsen that he would be present at the court with two witnesses, both members of the LDS Church, and that if Ipsen wished to deny them entrance, he would have to do it in the public eye. Ipsen informed the Rev. Storer that *there will be Priesthood security to prevent anyone coming within earshot of the court's proceedings.*

The outcome of all this? First, the Rev. Storer and his witnesses were not admitted, and the court voted to excommunicate him. But, more importantly, many gay Christians have discovered the MCC community through all of the media coverage, and, in general, community response has been very positive throughout the conflict, effecting a new cohesiveness among the congregation of the MCC at Boise, Idaho. †

SOCIAL ACTION DIRECTOR TAKES ISSUE OVER SEMINARY'S REFUSAL TO ADMIT GAY STUDENT

Adam DeBaugh is at it again. The Chairperson of the UFMCC Commission on Christian Social Action, and one of the few gay lobbyists on the Hill, Adam has been known to do battle with any number of persons or agencies over human rights issues. This time, Adam has taken on the Methodist Church; more specifically, Adam has taken issue with Dr. Jameson Jones, President of Iliff Theological School in Denver, CO, over his refusal to admit a gay student to the Master of Divinity program.

It all started in August 1977 when Allen Grooms, an Exhorter from MCC Washington, D.C., visited the Iliff campus, prior to applying for admission. He and his spouse were treated cordially by the Admissions people, and were even shown married students' housing. Allen applied to Iliff, and Adam, a personal friend of Allen's, supplied one of the required personal recommendations.

On July 14, 1978, Allen received a letter from Dr. Jones in which Jones returned his application for admission. In the letter, Jameson indicated that the reasons for denying Allen's admission had to do with funding allocations:

Actions of the 1976 General Conference of the United Methodist Church are being interpreted in some quarters in a way that would prohibit the General Council on Finance and Administration from distributing any of the Church's money to a seminary that approves or promotes the acceptance of homosexuality. In Iliff's case, that Council distributes to us more than $300,000 a year, about one-third of our educational and general budget.

The most ironic aspect of this situation is that two other MCC ministers, the Rev. Elder Charlie Arehart and the Rev. Dusty Pruitt, are currently enrolled at Iliff.

After lengthy discussions with a friend who is a Methodist minister, Adam decided to write to Dr. Jones. In his letter, Adam challenged Dr. Jones' decision on two major points:

Your personal decision to bar Allen Grooms from Iliff raises serious questions on a number of levels. While I recognize that the United Methodist Church has refused to ordain open gay people, that should not be a consideration in reviewing Mr. Grooms' application since he has no intention of seeking ordination in the United Methodist Church. Allen Grooms has made it very clear that he seeks a good theological education so that he may become an MCC minister.

I know that all of us who work for the church are constantly torn by the demands of financial necessity and the pull of our consciences. But I would suggest that your bowing to what may be an economic necessity has put you squarely in violation of the Social Principles adopted in Portland in 1976, section II, The Nurturing Communi-

continued on page 26

ty, we read (under "D. Human Sexuality"), "Homosexuals no less than heterosexuals are persons of sacred worth, who need the ministry and guidance of the church in their struggles for human fulfillment, as well as the spiritual and emotional care of a fellowship which enables reconciling relationships with God, with others, and with self. Further, we insist that all persons are entitled to have their human and civil rights insured, though we do not condone the practice of homosexuality and consider this practice incompatible with Christian teaching."

Adam sent copies of the letter to several persons, including the Methodist Bishop of Colorado, the Chairperson of the Methodist Board of Higher Education and Ministry, and the co-chairperson of Affirmation, the United Methodist gay caucus.

In Jones' reply to Adam's letter, he indicated that because Adam had made the issue public, it removed Jones' freedom to enter into a discussion of those issues. In other words, end of dialogue.

The news media picked up the story, and articles on the issue were run in the *Washington Post*, and *Newscope*, an in-house Methodist publication. Also appearing in that issue of *Newscope* was a report that at a Board of Church and Society meeting in Washington, D.C., the Methodist Board passed a resolution to *work for passage of human and civil rights legislation* including *civil rights for homosexual persons.*

Of the UFMCC involvement in the case, Adam commented: *There are a lot of people in the Methodist Church who have expressed support for the stand we have taken. I believe our role in the growing dialogue has been an important one and that we are being taken quite seriously, and with great respect. I trust that we have not heard the last of this issue.* †

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

MCC Baltimore Aids Franciscans in Feeding and Clothing Needy

MCC Baltimore members are currently involved in collecting canned goods and usable clothing for needy people in their community. The food and clothing drive, called "Harvest Home" is sponsored by the Franciscan Center in that city.

A Theatre Party is scheduled for December 15, with 40 members and friends expected to attend a production of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol.* Also planned for December is a joint Christmas Party/Pot-Luck Dinner with Dignity.

Editor's Note: If your church is involved in an outreach to the poor like MCC Baltimore's, we'd like to hear about it. Send details on your ministry to *IN UNITY*, 5300 Santa Monica Blvd., Suite 304, Los Angeles, CA 90029. †

MCCKC *continued from page 24*

* How do we best organize our congregation for the nurturing of its members, and outreach to the world?

* How can we keep a warm "family" feeling as we get larger?

Ultimately, the entire congregation must be involved in answering these basic questions. The Committee regards its task as being: the raising of basic questions; doing the background research on these questions; providing a forum where concerned members and friends may direct their input; setting up some type of structure that will make it possible for the entire congregation to share in the final decisions. †

NORTH HOLLYWOOD, CA

The Rev. Randy Cypherd has been elected to the Board of Directors of the 1200 member San Fernando Valley Interfaith Council. The Council, composed of individuals concerned with Social Action, was formed in the 1960's as a pressure group to help insure equal housing for blacks. Representtative of every major denomination in the Valley, the Council's main outreach is to the elderly, operating a senior citizen's center in that community.

The Council has created a Gay Rights Task Force chaired by the Rev. Cypherd. He is also the Council's Program Director, in charge of the organization's educational programs, and monthly breakfasts. The Council co-sponsored the November 5 Ecumenical Service, held at the Greek Theatre in Hollywood, at which 2000 persons joined in worship.

Possibly the first open gay person to hold such a position on an interfaith council, the Rev. Cypherd indicated that his involvement with the Council has been "an interesting consciousness-raising experience. †

TAMPA, FLORIDA

The Rev. Jean M. Bush has been accepted as a Chaplain for the Pinellas Park Fire Department. She also works as a dispatcher for the fire department.

A staff minister for MCC Tampa, the Rev. Bush was licensed in July 1978. A feature article on her licenure was published by the *St. Petersburgh Times.* †

SANTA MONICA, CALIFORNIA

West Bay MCC Pastor Completes 20-day Fast

The Westside Ecumenical Council voted, again, to deny MCC West Bay membership in that organization. Pastor Jim Dykes fasted for 20 days to protest the action -- one day for each WEC member church.

The Rev. Dykes concluded his fast at a worship service attended by many supportive Pastors in the community October 1. Pastor Dykes remains optimistic that the Council will approve MCC's membership, despite the most recent ballot. An important result of his protest has been increased cooperation on the part of supportive colleagues in that organization.

The Rev. Dykes will be leaving the West Bay Pastorate in the near future, having accepted a call to pastor MCC San Francisco, CA. He assumes those duties January 1, 1979. †

QUINCY, ILLINOIS

MCC Illiamo Celebrates Third Anniversary

Worship Coordinator, Reid Christiansen, and the congregation of MCC Illiamo were joined by the New Freedom Evangelistic Team in celebration of that church's third anniversary.

The guest speaker at the congregational anniversary dinner was the Rev. Brenda Cisneros-Hunt, Pastor of MCC St. Paul, MN.

The celebration was a time of looking toward the future for the congregation. MCC Illiamo hopes to have a full time minister, Chartered Church status, and a building of their own by their next anniversary. †

had an evening of discussion about the Universal Fellowship, and how we could improve communications with them, and they with one another.

On the 23rd, I was privileged to share in the meeting of the District of Australasia Board of Home Missions. Again, I was afforded an opportunity to discuss the workings of this wonderful Fellowship of ours. After the meeting, off to dinner at the home of Arthur and Ralph, who have been together 20 years. We then went to a wine and cheese party in John Battersby's flat, where we engaged in an open forum about the UFMCC. I couldn't help but think that, there in that room, were about the same number of people who belonged to MCC-LA ten years ago, when I first became part of the church.

The following day, I noted in my log: "It doesn't seem possible, but today's really my last day in Melbourne." That evening, some 30 members met for their mid-week dinner, and 50 came for services afterward. After this inspiring service in their beautiful chapel, we went off to do some missionary work. Again, met some beautiful people, and after sharing with Karen and Jan into the wee hours, to sleep. At noon, I left for Sydney.

The Rev. Cliff Connors, and one of his Exhorters, David, met me at the airport and hurried me off to a forum on Religion and the Homosexual. Not only was I amazed that they were having this meeting, but that they had secured the use of the Paddington Town Hall for the sessions! That evening I was able to fulfill one of my fondest dreams — I attended a performance of "Die Meistersinger" at the Sydney Opera. Six wonderful hours of opulence and Richard Wagner at his melodic and heroic best! What a welcome to Sydney!

Saturday was a day of getting acquainted with the fine young theologian who now pastors our Sydney MCC, Clifford Connors, and his wonderful spouse, Patrick. We dined at a seafood restaurant for lunch, saw some of the town, rested, and got ready to attend a dinner at the Dutch Inn where a welcome reception was planned. The dinner was attended by some 25 members of the Sydney congregation. After dinner, we shared informally, and went to see how missionary work is done in Sydney, passing out handbills announcing the services on Sunday.

Sunday in Sydney was beautiful. Held a picnic in the Botanical Gardens in the center of the city, toured the famous circular quay, took a ferry ride across the bay and back. Then to the Village Church, which is a share facility woned by the Uniting Church (Methodist, Presbyterian, Congregational). There were 87 persons in the service that night. Gwen Matthews, wife of Pastor Rex Matthews of the Uniting Church, sang in the MCC choir. The spirit manifest by this congregation is a tribute to the work in Australia and to the entire Fellowship. After a great coffee hour — reminiscent of an English street fair, so festive — we visited with George Oakley in his apartment where we fellowshipped informally.

Monday, my last day in Sydney, Cliff and I drove to the Blue Mountains and the famous Three Sisters Peaks. It was a rare opportunity to share with the Rev. Connors, as well as see some of the countryside. We stopped at the home of Vera and Katy, toured their "farm and menagerie" and shared with Vera's three wonderful children. Then home for a dinner prepared by master chef Patrick, and off to the airport. Ten persons came to send me flying. As I boarded the plane, the Stewardess commented about my "most enthusiastic send-off". An hour later, I was met by just as enthusiastic a group at the Brisbane airport. Ivor (the Co-Worship Coordinator) and Adrian were our hosts. The group sat until midnight again talking about our common love, the Universal Fellowship. Poor Art — he was now hearing the "good news" for the umpteenth time on this trip — but he assured me he never tired of it.

Early the next morning, Audrey (also, Co-W.C.), Ivor, Art, and I visited Lone Pine, a Koala and Kangaroo Sanctuary. That evening, after a day of sharing with the worship coordinators of the Brisbane Study Group, we went to the home of one of the members for worship and communion. Some 20 came for the services, including Cliff Connors' parents, who live in Brisbane.

The next day, we left Australia for New Zealand. It certainly seemed like much more than two weeks since I landed at Perth. Five cities and congregations, hundreds of people, and a continuing love feast. How God is blessing us.

We were met at the airport in New Zealand by the Rev. Peter Alexander-Smith, his lover, Damien, and Isabelle, their flat-mate. That evening, the Auckland Study Group had a Prayer meeting and Bible Study, led by a dedicated young Exhorter, Ken. It was the first time I was privileged to meet Peter Alexander-Smith, whom I found to be a delightful mixture of Anglican Vicar (which he had been) and charismatic hippie. Peter moved at a leisurely pace, was enthralled with holding services of MCC in St. Matthew's Anglican Cathedral where, in full high church regalia, accompanied by a majestic pipe organ, he bangs his tambourine while doing an ecclesiastical jig before the altar to some sprightly chorus. (NOTE: The Rev. Peter Alexander-Smith died of a heart attack some ten days after my visit. The Rev. Jan Weymouth, who conducted his Memorial Service, sent us this word:

"Whilst funerals are not supposedto be happy events, there was a tremendous feeling of joy at the funeral of Peter Alexander-Smith. It was held in St. Matthew's Cathedral in the city. There were well over 100 people present. The staff of St. Matthew's was present, one of the Deacons participated in the service, local Presbyterian and Methodist ministers from Onehunga were there, and it was truly a wonderful testimony to Peter's life and the work he tried to do whilst he was in Auckland. I think the most wonderful part of it all was the unity that we felt. Even though coming from so many different backgrounds with so many different doctrinal points of view, there was a tremendous sense of all belonging to one Fellowship and all being one in Christ. I had the feeling that Peter's life had culminated in his death, and was teaching us all at once what it really means to love Christ."

During the next day, we met with newspaper reporters, did a TV interview, and visited Auckland. That evening, we had an open forum, which was attended by some 75 persons. At 9 PM we held a service with worship and Holy Communion. Some 50 people attended this service, of whom 5 were first-time worshippers. It was indeed a busy, but beneficial, day.

On Friday, Peter, Art, and I visited the renowned Maori museum, and were privileged to share insights into the work of this Fellowship. Late that night, Peter, Isabelle, Damien, and Art took me to the airport to send me on my way back to the United States. What a wonderful time in the Lord. I am truly grateful for having had this experience, and know that God's work will be richer in my life because of it, and, I hope, in the lives of those whom we touched on the way.

I spent several days in Hawaii, where I was privileged to walk the streets with the Rev. Paul Peachey, where he conducts a far-reaching Night Ministry. I joined Honolulu MCC for its mid-week prayer meeting, and realized in the informal sharing afterward, how isolated they, too, feel. My week in Hawaii was rounded out with dinner with the Board of MCC there, a discussion of their work, growth, problems, and happiness. I can't say enough good things about the wonderful outreach that this small, but indom-

continued on page 28

A Pastoral Challenge *continued from page 18*

for the individual to find comfortable relationships with others or with self."[6] The reader is referred to any basic work on personality development for a complete discussion of this dynamic. Briefly, this period of development could be explained by using the example of the breast feeding. If the child begins to bite during teething, and the mother withdraws the attention and time alloted to the child abruptly, as a way of weaning him or her, the child will feel insecure, and mistrust will begin developing.

It is the hypothesis of this paper that trust/mistrust is an important issue in pastoral care within the homosexual community. The juxtaposition of development between trust/mistrust and sexual identity is crucial. The homosexual child is bombarded by signals of heterosexual model. This confusion of personality integrity (homosexuality) with role model (heterosexuality) would produce a condition in which mistrust would become an integral part of the personality. Therefore, the reason, developmentally, that the role of trust is so important in pastoral counseling within the gay and lesbian community, becomes apparent. The basic striving is for a trusting relationship. This is true of all people. This search for a trusting relationship is a high priority in the needs system for many individuals (within the homosexual community).

In the ministry of Metropolitan Community Church, when the question is asked, "Can you keep my secret?", it becomes a question of basic value. The short history of our church has been built on integrity, the integrity of keeping the secret of the closet. As that issue begins to fade, we must face the dynamic behind our giving people permission to trust us. We must guard the confidentiality of those who offer us their lives. We must, as the pastors of old, guard our flocks. †

[1]Pastor will be used to mean any person who fulfills the role of minister to another person.

[2]Johnson, Paul Psychology of Pastoral Care, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1953. p. 20.

[3]op. cit. p. 19.

[4]Holme, William, Pastoral Care Come of Age, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1970, p. 10.

[5]Erikson, Erik, Childhood and Society, New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1963.

[6]Wise, Carroll, The Meaning of Pastoral Care, New York: Harper & Row, 1966, p. 95.

The Church's Responsibility *continued from page 7*

conscious of our lofty calling, and endeavor to practice what we preach. We could say, along with Soren Kirkegaard, the Scandinavian theologian of the last century, when he was asked why Christianity had failed: "Failed! It's never been tried in order to succeed." †

As Long As Love Shall Last *continued from page 27*

itable group is carrying forward.

Of one thing you can be sure, I now fully understand the mission of this Church, this Fellowship, this Body of Christ. On the entire trip, I can truly say "I never met a stranger!" The common denominator is the Love of God, as expressed by the gift of Christ for our salvation. More than ever in my life, I felt the responsiveness to Christ's command: "Go ye therefore into all the world!" †

Profile *continued from page 19*

field to run away from being gay. I was called to it. But it obviously was a solution to keep out of harm's way. There were few opportunities for temptation.

"But I came home, and knew I had to do something about it. I went to a party given by friends, and it suddenly dawned on me that they were gay. I met a woman, Rita, there -- I talked to her because she looked like a Christian. She was a Catholic, and things went well for a while."

When the Catholic Church learned that Rita was gay, they gave her the option -- give up Jean or stop attending Mass:

"She came home and told me she was not going to Mass anymore, therefore, I wasn't going to church anymore. I told her 'what you do for you, is for you, but you can't tell me what to do.' That began the breakup of our relationship. But now she comes to MCC."

The Rev. White, like many of us, went through a period of doubt regarding herself and MCC:

"I went through a very rough time thinking, 'Well maybe I'm wrong, maybe MCC isn't right.' -- But I knew down deep it was right, because when I heard Troy speak, what he said was what I was going through at that time. I was called before a Board and told I would have to see a Christian psychiatrist, and all sorts of wayout things like having demons cast out of me. But I knew MCC was right for me, and I refused to do those things."

The Rev. Tom Bigelow was the first person to recognize Jean's calling to the UFMCC ministry:

"Tom Bigelow came from America, and the first day he arrived -- he didn't know me at all -- he said, 'The Lord has told me you've got to become an Exhorter.' And I said 'when the Lord tells me I'm to be an Exhorter, I'll do it.' "

The Rev. White served the London congregation as a Deacon and member of the Board of Directors, prior to licensure. She currently serves as Treasurer for World Church Extension area of the United Kingdom and Western Europe. Jean is secularly employed as the head nursing administrator for a large maternity hospital.

Jean's varied leadership positions within the London church were partly the result of indecision over what direction the Lord wanted her to take:

"You go through this period where you know what you should be doing, but you have fear, not wanting to tread on people's toes. And then one day the Lord puts you in a situation where you realize you just have to go out and do it, because there's nobody else. You watch things go up and down for years and then one day the Lord just tells you 'Look, I've been telling you for a long time what to do, so. . .' "

Talking with the Rev. Elder Freda Smith crystalized Jean's dealing honestly with her contribution to the UFMCC ministry:

"When Freda came over, it was like a catalyst. She made us look at ourselves to really see where we were. She could see that when asked about something at the church, people would say 'Ask Jean, she would know,' because I'd been there so long. So, Freda finally asked me, 'What are you going to do about it?' (people depending on her). I knew what I was going to do about it, and had known for a long time. I guess the timing just wasn't right till then."

Quiet, assured, stable, spiritual; the by-products of a life devoted to living in union with God and in service to God's people. The Rev. Jean White's time has come. †